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MACRIMMON.

A HIGHLAND TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

REDMOND THE REBEL, COSPATRICK OF RAYMONDSHOLM, ST.
KATHLEEN, &c.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here ;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer—
Chasing the deer and following the roe ;
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go. *Gaelic Song.*

VOL. I.

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MACRIMMON.

CHAPTER I.

Despite his titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concenter'd all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung. SCOTT.

“YOU are but a thankless dog at the best, Charly,” said old John Clifford, of Bilton Grange, Northumberland, as from his threshold he watched the retreating steps of a young man, who, with a downcast, yet somewhat indignant expression of countenance, had newly quitted his dwelling; “you are but a thankless dog,

I say—so get ye gone, now and for ever. Instead of waiting patiently until you saw what decent trade I might think it advisable to apprentice you to, you would follow your own vagaries, clap a red rag on your back, and a sword at your side, and so strut forth from your uncle's house like an impudent turkey-cock. *You* may have forgot that circumstance, but *I* have not; and now I neither care *where* you have been, or *what* you have been, for the last two years; neither do I seek to know what you are, or where you are going. I only desire to see my outer gate fairly closed on such a scapegrace; so get ye gone, now and for ever.”

“ I am fast obeying, sir,” said the offender, though his lagging step contradicted the assertion. “ Yet, before we part for good and all, as you wish, I would fain try to prove that I am not the heartless ingrate you take me for. I would wish to shew, that in procuring
me

me the appointment I now hold, my friend Coulson has assisted me to reach what I hope is but a stepping-stone to future honour and emolument."

"It is a stepping-stone, I suspect, you will not be apt to quit in a hurry," said old Clifford, grinning maliciously, "unless, indeed, a bullet makes you hop from it into the grave. Take my word for it, young man, many a fellow, with more sense than falls to your share, finds his head grow gray with only one epaulet on his shoulder. As to your friend Coulson, as you style him, I have only to say, God send him luck of you! He has at least done one good turn, in ridding the neighbourhood of your precious carcase; and for that, in common with my neighbours, I feel truly grateful. Of course, now that you can securely calculate on his patronage and advice, there is no further necessity for keeping terms with old John Clifford. Comparatively speaking, I can have no claims on your
B 2 gratitude.

gratitude. I merely took you, a puling brat, from the breast of your dying mother; fed, clothed, educated you, till you acquired sufficient impudence to snap your fingers in my face, and scout my authority, the first moment you could do so with impunity. But such obligations as these are mere trifles, no doubt, in the estimation of a fine dashing fellow like you, entitled to wear a rapier, and to snuff gunpowder in the field, and legally licensed as a public executioner."

"Heaven can bear witness how unjust are the accusations you bring against me!" said the youth, vexation crimsoning his cheeks. "Notwithstanding the unkind manner in which you repulse me from your door, I must and will declare, that I am and ever have been grateful for the manifold benefits received at your hand. But can it be, that in trying to render myself no longer burthensome, I have utterly forfeited all claim to your affection? Must I be
driven

driven, by your aspersions, to proclaim that I found my benefactor too severe a taskmaster; that I proved sneers and insults, heaped alike on the living and on the dead, too galling to be longer borne; and that finally the bread of your charity became too bitter for any human being to subsist on?"

"You will get cold, Charly, if you stand fuming and fretting there," said the uncle, ironically; "so take my advice, draw the gate after you, and be-gone."

"Before I go," said Charly, in a more resolute voice than heretofore, "there is another point on which I must desire to be enlightened; for, to confess the truth, anxiety regarding it principally gave rise to this visit. I have hitherto been kept in almost-total ignorance of my family history. You are the only person from whom I can expect to learn it correctly; from you, therefore, now that

we are on the point of final separation, I seriously demand it."

"Then, take my word for it," said old Clifford, "if I comply, you will have but little to pride yourself on at its conclusion. I would, out of sheer friendship, recommend you to rest satisfied with what you already know, and decamp without delay."

"Recommend me to rest satisfied with what I already know," repeated his nephew; "you must think me sparingly endued with natural feeling, were I to adopt your advice, for *nothing* is the sum of my knowledge. But, on this subject, I came not here to dally. I must, and will know, by what unfortunate tissue of circumstances I was thrown helpless and destitute on your bounty. Speak out, old man! I am not the timid boy that two years ago fled your house, without daring to let a word of inquiry fall from his lips, or a
glance

glance of his eye rest on that stern visage."

"So I perceive," said the uncle, ironically, and waxing cool as his kinsman became heated; "the army is a precious school for acquiring audacity, and a habit of command. I am all over trembling at your resolute style of going to work, and, to the utmost extent in my power, shall immediately deprecate your wrath. Know then that I stood related as half-brother to your mother, of whom you cannot expect me to speak largely, when told that I never set eyes on her, from the time she was a mere child in the nurse's arms, till the day on which she died a parent. Being averse to submitting to a stepfather, I never paid my maternal home a visit; and it was only by the voice of rumour that I learnt sister Ellen, on the death of her a second time widowed mother, had gone to Edinburgh, and there formed an intimacy with some brainless and
B 4 beggarly

beggarly whipper-snapper like yourself, to whom she foolishly entrusted the few pounds her thoughtless parents had bequeathed as her dowry. The next account I had of her went to say, that along with her Scotch friend she had returned to Newcastle, and would be amazingly glad to be on good terms with me; but I knew better than to burn my fingers with such a pie, and at that time wisely kept my distance. From the first I saw it was a bad affair, nor was it long before the accuracy of this surmise was verified. I received a very penitent epistle, intimating that her own behaviour had laid her on her deathbed at last—that she was leaving an unchristened child entirely destitute; its father, cautious man! having, when the storm began to lower, taken leg-bail, and removed himself to America; and that unless I displayed some compassion, and became its protector, her last hours would be embittered past human nature

to ,

to bear. After such a letter, there was no help for it but to lend a favourable ear to her petition; so I went to the trouble and expence of a journey to Newcastle, gave sister Ellen as decent a burial as she deserved, and, like a fool, brought you, a helpless brat, to the Grange, that I might rear an object of annoyance to my old age."

As he had been led to expect, there was indeed little in this detail for his auditor to pride himself on. His glistening eyes, and the still-deepening colour of his cheeks, declared the pain inflicted; and his voice was tremulous and indistinct, as he said—"But a few words more, and I am gone. What was—why bear I not my father's name?"

"You bear it not, because I did not choose to have a name I knew to be a bad one, shouted over my house morning, noon, and night," answered old Clifford, exulting in the pain his narrative had given. "I found you unchristened,

christened, as I said before; your mother was unable to intimate what Christian appellation she choosed you to receive; so I took the liberty of naming you Charles Clifford, after my worthy father. To that, as soon as you think fit, you can add Mac—Mac—confound the barbarous sound of it! it has entirely escaped my memory! Yet, on the whole, you will suffer little loss, though you never know it; and trust me, the less you boast of your Scottish blood the better.”

“There is small risk of my doing so, I believe,” said his nephew, as crest-fallen as he could desire. “Yet I would that you could recollect this despised name, or inform me how I shall be able to find it out.”

“Nay, if I do not recollect it myself,” said the old man, “there is no other person you need apply to. Your worthy parents knew too well how little commendation their conduct deserved, to make friends who would burden their
memories

memories with their story for twenty years after. I was told that the Scot, previous to his flight, talked bigly about realizing a fine fortune in the course of no time, as soon as he had set his foot on the other side of the Atlantic, and, in due season, sending home for his darling, to rejoin and help him to spend it. I shrewdly suspect, however, he found himself quite competent to fulfil the latter part of the business, and have no authority for saying that he ever became so wealthy as he anticipated. The only successful speculation, I am aware, he ever engaged in, was digging a grave for sister Ellen, and burdening me with his hopeful offspring. As to his name, I don't much care if I put myself to some trouble in order to refresh my memory. Stay where you are until I return. It occurs to me that I ought to have a letter from this same Mac—Mac—Mac—”

Without ceremony he shut the door

in his nephew's face, and before he withdrew from it, to prosecute his search after the document, the latter heard him carefully shoot home the bolts. Upwards of a quarter of an hour elapsed before they were again undrawn, and during that space of time the youth traversed, with hurried and irregular steps, the small court in which he was left. At length the meagre, crabbed face of old Clifford was once more protruded from the small aperture left by the half-open door; and his shrill scolding voice made known that his search had been fruitless, and that no letter was forthcoming.

The young man actually groaned with anguish and disappointment, when he heard this intimated.—“Then there is no trace left, no memorial—not even a father's name,” he faintly articulated. “Shame is my only birthright, and with that I must depart.”

“To shew that I have no wish to withhold

withhold any thing you have the least title to," said the old man, holding out something wrapped in a small piece of paper, "I have brought you the only trifle in my possession belonging to your parents. You will find here two miniatures painted on ivory, a most reprehensible piece of extravagance for any people, who lived from hand to mouth as they did, to indulge in. That of the woman is sister Ellen, to my own knowledge; and finding it in such company, there can be no doubt but that the other is your precious vagabond of a father. You are heartily welcome to all the information they can give you, and if the name of the latter should occur to me, or the letter cast up, I will intimate the same to your friend, Cleveland Coulson, with whom, like all other wise-aces newly launching into the world, you doubtless maintain an interesting and instructive correspondence, to the no small benefit of his majesty's revenue.

After

After this special act of kindness, I may assuredly, without rudeness, shut the door."

His nephew was in no mood to reply, and the door was closed against him, without his noticing it. Already occupied in scanning the lineaments delineated on the ivory with insatiable eyes, he had no further attention to bestow on his irascible and jeering kinsman. He first looked on the female face—the face of his mother, as he had been given to understand; and for a time, in the intensity of his contemplation, forgot that the reverse side contained the features of his other parent. The fair and polished brow, the soft dark eye, the curling raven hair, setting off by contrast the bright face its tresses clustered round, entranced and rivetted his gaze with no ordinary power. Was that countenance, so full of beauty, already dust? had care furrowed and wrinkled it before death, and had no gentle hand
been

been near to close those lovely lips and eyes, when it became necessary to consign to the earth all that remained of her early charms? And her conduct, too, had it been blameless? had she been more “sinned against than sinning?” or had her actions and mind been equally base, and her fate as unworthy of commiseration as her memory of a child’s love? There was not one of these mental interrogations but sent its sting to his heart, and the last stab struck the deepest.

From the fair face of his mother he finally directed his attention to the other miniature, in which he dared not hope to meet the same virtuous and benignant expression; but in this he was disappointed, or at least he could discover nothing in the countenance that substantiated his uncle’s declaration of utter worthlessness and cruelty having distinguished him of whom it was the semblance. It was the gay, smiling face
of

of a youth, fresh as the morning, blue-eyed, and with locks like the beams of a newly-risen sun. Had Clifford given way to his own conceptions of physiognomy, and perhaps to the promptings of his heart, he would have pronounced it as his opinion, that in those features there was nothing expressive of depravity. He would have said that it was the face of one exuberant in spirit, and immature in character, but neither uniformly deceptive, nor systematically wicked; and yet, when he recalled to mind the many apparently amiable and promising young men he had met with, even in his limited period of observation, who held their honour and their word cheap but in one single point, and in all others were upright and invulnerable, he dared not unreservedly cherish the favourable impression he found take possession of his breast. Fully more dissatisfied than before he obtained them, he at length wrapped up the likenesses

so as to secure them from injury ; and throwing a farewell glance over the inhospitable walls of Bilton Grange, turned from it with a resolute and hasty step.

Bilton was a small and retired village on the coast of Northumberland, and the Grange an antiquated mansion on its outskirts. It had for several generations been occupied by the ancestors of its present owner, who was generally looked upon as a wealthy but parsimonious man ; and, as has been already mentioned, it had sheltered the helpless years and friendless head of him who now found himself repulsed from its gate. As his uncle had, with more truth than regard to his feelings, set forth, he had indeed reared and educated him ; but never for a moment, during his long sojourn under his roof, had he been allowed to forget that he was the child of charity : it was drummed into his ears in infancy and in boyhood—it was

was the first full sentence he learned to comprehend, and the last that followed his departing steps, when, gladly grasping at the ensigney offered him by the father of his juvenile friend and school-companion, Coulson, he eventually shook off his iron servitude. Every rent the romping boy made in his scanty apparel had regularly brought down a severe reprimand, coupled with an intimation not to overlook that he was but a beggar; every mouthful of food he swallowed had for seasoning a miserly grudge at the ravenous appetite of youngsters. To crown all, when the youth, no longer able to endure his taunts, embraced that opportunity of emancipating himself, which his harsh and penurious kinsman gave himself no trouble to bring about, he decidedly refused to advance a shilling towards his equipment, but left the same individual who had obtained the young man his appointment to stand his friend in this instance also, and the latter

latter to lie under the weight of a debt, which required of him long and strict economy to discharge.

He had already been upwards of two years in the army, greater part of which he had spent on active service in Portugal and Spain. After sharing, under sir John Moore, the hardships attendant on the disastrous retreat on Corunna, and witnessing the death of that brave but unfortunate man, he had again returned to England, promoted one step in rank, and unscathed by battle, it is true, yet not altogether unharmed. Fatigue and privation had been endured unshrinkingly, and, while suffering under them, seemingly without detriment to his constitution; but when the storm blew over, and the sight of his native land promised a long season of sunshine and quiet, his frame lost its hardihood, and he fevered before his disembarkation. It required months to restore him to his pristine vigour, and during the
interim

interim his regiment had been marched to Scotland, where it ultimately became necessary he should likewise repair. For this purpose he commenced his journey northward; and in as short a space as his returning strength admitted, reached Felton-Main, the residence of his friend Cleveland Coulson.

After passing a few days in his highly-valued society, he took the road to Bilton, from which he had been induced partially to deviate, in order to discover whether time and absence had mollified the wrath of his uncle, and, if possible, to learn such points of his family history as were absolutely requisite for him to know. The issue of these inquiries has already been detailed. From his uncle's dwelling he went straight to the village inn, where the postchaise which had brought him from Felton remained in waiting; and by the same conveyance proceeded on to Alnwick, whence the mail carried him on to Scotland.

CHAP.

CHAPTER II.

I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for naebody;
If naebody care for me,
I'll care for naebody.

Scottish Song.

TRAVELLING in a coach is, of all modes, the worst calculated for scanning the features, or forming a just opinion, of a country; but had better opportunity offered, Clifford was not in a propitious mood for deriving benefit, or of feeling at all interested in the aspect of that over which he was whirled. Nevertheless, when, in the dusk of a gloomy evening, he crossed the Tweed, and, for the first time, inhaled the air, and felt his feet pressing Scottish ground, the idea sent a painful thrill to his heart.

He

He stood on the natal soil of his father—that father whose memory he knew not whether it became him to cherish or to forget; and the conviction was rife with many disagreeable and sickening pangs.

But when he reached Edinburgh, and permitted his eyes to open on the grandeur and beauty of that country, he might almost be said to feel predisposed not to admire—his mind came to admit of more pleasing and soothing impressions. Anxious to devote as much time as he could possibly spare to a survey of the city, he resolved not to quit it until the full expiration of his sick-leave; nor did he find cause to alter or regret his resolution. This delay gave him an opportunity of getting the miniatures of his parents carefully enclosed in a locket, which he might always retain about his person; for notwithstanding the dark shade thrown over their memory, his heart still attached a sacred value to the
relic.

relic. This accomplished, and his leave of absence come to a close, he threw himself once more into the coach, and proceeded on to Perth, the headquarters of his regiment.

Between the capital and Queensferry, he had the society of two fellow-travelers; the one a sandy-haired, grey-eyed, and high cheek-boned man, apparently about thirty-five, and, on the whole, not unhandsome in his *tout-ensemble*; the other, a youth bordering on his twentieth year, with dark auburn locks, expressive blue eyes, and a face intelligent and prepossessing. More than once Clifford fancied he could trace a resemblance betwixt them; yet, at the same time, he was compelled to acknowledge that their expression of character was totally dissimilar. The aspect of the elder was thoughtful, and some might have said intimidating, notwithstanding the smooth front he invariably tried to maintain. His person was manly, and rather of
large

large proportion; his voice full, sonorous, and slightly marked by an accent new to the Englishman, but which, he rightly inferred, betokened the Highlander. On the contrary, care had not yet hardened one lineament in the face of the youth, nor suspicion ploughed one furrow on his open brow. No thought was concealed, no assiduity evinced, to prove himself what he was not; but goodwill to all men stood confessed in every word and look. His figure was slight and graceful, and his voice gentle as his nature appeared to be, though, like that of his companion, tinged with the “accents of the mountain tongue.”

Had it not been that Clifford was as yet a stranger to the Scottish character in its native soil, and, in the present instance, set himself to scrutinize it with all the enthusiasm of a novice, it is more than probable he would not have so narrowly contrasted his fellow-travellers.

Be

Be that as it may, he quickly discovered, from their learning and conversation, that both must be of at least a respectable rank in life; and that if any difference existed in this respect, the balance preponderated in favour of the younger; not that there was any thing presumptuous in his demeanour, or servile in that of the other, but merely that he seemed on those easy and familiar terms which entitled him to say sportive things without hazard of reproof—sallies the other shewed a wish to encourage, rather than to repress. Both displayed intelligence, and were generally conversant on such topics as were started, more especially the senior, who soon proved his information, relative to the statistics and capabilities of the country, as highly valuable and comprehensive.

When the coach reached the ferry, immediate preparation was made for crossing without delay, notwithstanding

it blew a strong breeze from the eastward, and a heavy swell came rolling in from the firth. In a stout well-managed boat they soon after left the land, and were quickly wafted into the mid-channel. There, by some unfortunate accident, the younger Highlander, whom his companion styled Lochullin, had his hat driven from his head into the water; and in making an effort to regain it, he lost his balance, and pitched headlong out of the boat. A scene of alarm instantly ensued. Scudding under a heavy press of sail, it required some time for the boat to stand about; and before that could be done, the object of general anxiety was already at a considerable distance, a strong ebb-tide carrying him fast towards the open firth, in the very eye of the gale. He speedily proved himself to be a good swimmer, and for a considerable space struggled bravely against the current; but at length finding his exertions availed him nothing,
and

and that they must eventually end in his total exhaustion, he obliqued towards the north shore; and by so doing, permitted the boat to make a tack, with some prospect of reaching him. But the tack was made in vain; and a second fell equally short of the now-nearly-exhausted swimmer, notwithstanding the boat was hauled as close up to the wind as practicable. Thus all chance of saving him appeared at an end, when Clifford, as a last resource, threw off his clothes, and with a small rope fastened round his body, prepared to swim to his assistance, provided a third tack should be made with no better success. The crew made some demur to this proposition, conceiving it likely to occasion the loss of a second life; and even the friend of the drowning man, who evinced wonderful coolness throughout, strongly opposed it, as savouring of the most mistaken rashness and temerity; but the Englishman's resolution was not to be

set aside. As was anticipated, the boat missed him, as before, but by such a trifling space as proved, that could he but keep his head above water until the next tack, there was every chance of his final rescue. Clifford's ear caught the faint accents that declared this impossible, and without further hesitation he flung himself overboard.

For a time all was speechless anxiety in the boat, and this augmented tenfold, when it was discovered that the line which Clifford carried out with him had slipped its hold, and left him as much a castaway as he to whom he desired to give assistance. Two men were now in mortal jeopardy; and though he who had last plunged into the waves was fresh in vigour, and soon evinced himself an expert swimmer, by the ease with which he floated, and the speed with which he reached the object of his humane attempt, still there were fearful odds against either being picked up in
sufficient

sufficient time to preserve life. With beating hearts did the crew await the result of this the last tack, they dared hope, had the remotest chance of success. Every arm was stretched forth in readiness to lend assistance the moment it could be given—every voice hushed into deathlike silence, as their little vessel dashed roughly through the agitated water. In the end this commendable anxiety had its own reward. Clifford, notwithstanding one hand was occupied in supporting the sinking youth, beat the waves with the other, still fresh and undaunted. When a rope was cast out to him, he expeditiously fastened the ready-prepared noose round Lochullin; and not till he saw him safely lifted on board, did he accept the help offered to himself.

His long immersion in the water, and the alarm incident to such a perilous situation, subsequently left the young Highlander in a state bordering on insensibility;

sensibility ; and as little or nothing could be done for his recovery while in the open firth, the wisest plan seemed to be to set all sail for the shore. This was accordingly done ; and Clifford had scarcely resumed his clothes ere the boat reached the pier of North Queensferry, and permitted them to land. The invalid was carried to the inn by the boatmen, under the superintendence of his friend ; and anxious to ascertain the extent of the injury he had received previous to bidding him adieu, his preserver followed.

When a medical man pronounced this to be nothing more than torpor, arising from the length of time he had been in the water, and debility, occasioned by his protracted struggle ; and when, along with various medicaments to be taken internally, a few days rest was also strenuously recommended, Clifford, seeing no farther occasion for his stay, shook the clammy hand of the still-
speechless

speechless patient, and withdrew to prosecute his journey. The friend followed him to the door, and as he did so, said—
“ I shall never be forgiven, my dear sir, if I permit you to depart without inquiring the name of him to whom we are so greatly indebted ?”

Clifford gave him his card.—“ I am travelling to Perth,” said he, “ where my regiment is at present quartered; and if, as I infer, you are journeying to the North, shall feel gratified by your remembrance.”

“ We shall not fail to make due use of your address,” said the stranger; “ but before we separate, let me return the trinket you entrusted to my keeping previous to leaping into the water. The beauty of the female face has tempted me to examine it, and the close resemblance it bears to you proclaims it that of a near relation.”

“ Near indeed !” said the Englishman,

c 4

a flush,

a flush, partly of vexation, crossing his face; "she was my mother."

"And the face on the reverse side of the ivory?" inquired the other, with increasing presumption.

Clifford almost unconsciously filled up the sentence, by adding—"Is that of my other parent."

The Highlander blushed, possibly with shame, at his own inquisitiveness, tendered his hand to assist him to get into the coach, bowed, and disappeared.

It was not till he had been whirled over several miles of road, that the Englishman recollected the Scot had not made him acquainted with his own designation in return. The flurry into which his mind had, in all likelihood, been thrown by the recent accident, seemed sufficiently to plead his excuse for the omission; and the certainty that it would be rectified on their passing through Perth deprived it of all singularity.

Arrived

Arrived and settled in Perth, Clifford soon found it a much more agreeable quarter than, owing to his scanty knowledge of Scotland, he had dared to anticipate. The genteel society the town and neighbourhood affords, the prepossessing aspect the former internally presents, and, above all, the varied and magnificent features of the surrounding country, had each more or less a share in creating this favourable impression; and disposed, by a long and arduous campaign, to be easily satisfied with any sort of quarters in his own peaceful and happy islands, the restless exhilaration of military bustle was gladly resigned for inactivity and repose. It therefore occasioned annoyance to the majority of the officers, when, in little more than a month afterwards, a mandate arrived for the removal of the regiment to Fort George—a station the greater part looked upon as nothing better than a place of honourable exile, where they could

calculate on meeting with few of the comforts, much less the luxuries and amusements, of civilized life.

As to Clifford, he gave himself little trouble about the matter. His partiality for Perth was not so deeply rooted, as to give rise even to a sigh at leaving it; yet, on the whole, he felt some degree of aversion to the idea of being buried for perhaps twelve months in the Highlands. An excursion of a few weeks, merely to scan the face of the country, he would have had no objection to have undertaken; indeed he had often proposed such a ramble to a brother-officer, with whom he was on terms of the closest intimacy, and whose mind and principles, on all material points, closely assimilated with his own; but a sojourn of greater duration appeared by no means desirable. The enthusiastic rant made, by the few Scotch officers belonging to the regiment, of Highland beauty and Highland hospitality, he felt inclined to
amply

amply curtail, and take in a very modified sense. The first he called not in question, farther than by saying, that men who had been habituated to admire the bright complexions and azure eyes of the English ladies, and the lovely black-eyed brunettes of Portugal and Spain, could hardly expect to find superior charms in women born on the confines of the Polar Sea. As to hospitality, that he felt inclined almost totally to discredit. The unhandsome neglect manifested by the young Highlander he had preserved, in his having passed through Perth without deigning to make the least inquiry after him, had thoroughly disgusted him with the Highland character; therefore the idea of deriving pleasure from association with the inhabitants was scouted as most improbable.

The march commenced; and skirting the eastern coast, by short and agreeable stages, the lofty snow-clothed mountains

of Ross-shire, in due time, made their appearance ; and, two days after, the regiment filed under the cannon of Fort George. From its bastions, the Scotch officers were not dilatory in pointing out to their English and Irish comrades the magnificent scenery amongst which they were thus suddenly thrown ; as they did so, inquiring, with looks of exultation, if the British islands could boast of a more complete fortification, a more beautiful expanse of water than the Moray Firth ; or mountainous Spain itself, of ridges and peaks more majestic and picturesque than those stretching along the western horizon, far beyond the dimly-distinguished spires of Inverness?

The Englishmen were too polite to answer otherwise than by a smile, a shrug, or a quotation from Johnson's "Journey to the Hebrides;" but the Irishmen laughed outright in the faces of the panegyrists—swore Sawney spoke God's

God's truth—but added, that for their part they were well assured no mortal man who had ever had his foot on the Emerald Isle, could seriously think it a country good enough for quartering pigs in, much less men. The Scotchmen found prejudice had taken the field against them, and being the weakest party, and least endowed with the “gift of the gab,” gave up the contest—silenced, but still maintaining their positions.

To do Clifford's discrimination and liberality of opinions justice, it must not be concealed, that, unfavourably biassed as was his mind, he did not withhold that meed of admiration so evidently due to the striking features of the land. One saunter round the ramparts of the fort was sufficient to make him confess, that never had his eyes beheld a more glorious prospect, than when, turning his face to the westward, he permitted his glance to range over the blue curling billows of the firth, the towns
and

and hamlets, the woods and rocks, that ornament its shores, or, from these nearer objects, lifted it to the conic summits at its inland extremity, which, rising regularly behind each other, ridge above ridge, when thinly crested with snow, traverse the country like lofty broken waves. If his heart was not inclined to christen it the "sweetest land on earth," he readily admitted that it ranked among the loveliest and the wildest.

Averse to acquiring the local information he desired from his Scotch comrades, who, nettled by the incredulity of John Bull and the jeers of Pat, seemed to hold it as a point of honour to say nothing disadvantageous to their native soil, he one day put a few questions to an old invalid, whom he accidentally encountered on one of the bastions. The crippled limbs and scarred countenance of the veteran proclaimed him a solitary memorial of battles long fought and forgotten. He knew little or nothing

thing of Egypt, of Buenos Ayres, and still less of Maida, of Vimeira, of Corunna; yet

“Many a favouring witness he could cite
Of young exploits and arduous duty done,
From names his younger auditor but knew
In history.”

Of Bunker's Hill, Brandywine, and Saratoga, he could speak for whole days on end; and Clifford soon found, to his cost, that by indulging him in the outset, he had opened a masked battery on himself, which he knew not well how to silence; unless he absolutely took to flight.

After listening, with good-humoured patience, to a story setting forth how, in such and such an action, the general-in-chief had thought proper to object to the Scottish regiments advancing to the charge to the sound of the bagpipe; how, in consequence, the Highlanders were twice repulsed with great slaughter;

ter; how, on the silence of their national music being assigned as the reason why they had not behaved with their usual intrepidity, the general, in a few pithy words, desired the piper to strike up a pibroch again; and how they then gallantly discomfited the enemy at the point of the bayonet, Clifford took advantage of the narrator having run himself out of breath, and inquired what sort of men were the Highland lairds of the present day?

“What sort o’ men are they?” echoed the veteran; “why, just men like ourselves. Gude flesh and blood, when they’re abune grund, and filthy yird when they’re aneath it.”

“It is of their characters, their dispositions, the general opinion entertained regarding them, with which I wish to become acquainted,” said Clifford.

“Weel,” returned the other, in a tone of conscious independence, “I’ll try to answer ye; and as I was born on the
right

right side o' the Grampians, by which I mean the south, shall speak freely as I think. As to their character, it may pass where there's naebody to find faut wi't. Their disposition is to be aye making money at hame, an' aye spending awa; and as for the general opinion entertained regarding them, that's weel established—a' body that has oney sense thinks them gaen clean daft wi' pride."

Clifford could not restrain his mirth at this off-hand sketch, which, he could easily perceive, was indebted for its high colouring to the delineator being born on the "right side of the Grampians."—"And are none excluded from this description?" inquired he, when laughter permitted him.

"There's nae rule without exception," replied the veteran; "and I dare say, you'll find gude, bad, and indifferent fouk in the Hielands, as weel as in ither places. But, to speak the real truth, I ken little about them; only this much
I can

I can tell you, that in my time the privates aye liket a south-country officer best. If he was an Englishman, he let us tak the duty easy, provided we were weel behaved, and never grudged a shilling or twa ower head to his company on great occasions. If he was an Irishman, so as we fought well, we might kick up the devil's delight, morning, noon, or night, without fear o' guard-house, drill, or halberts. If he was a Lowland Scotchman, he was, sure enough, gay and particular; keepit a close nive on the bawbees, and a wary e'e to the commanding offisher; yet he had a canny, quiet wye o' doing things, and a smooth couthie word for gentle and simple. But if he came frae the hills, ten to one but he had the curstness and pride of a Turk, and devil ae gude quality, except that o' hauding his face bravely fornent the enemy."

Clifford saw that he was already in possession of all the old serjeant's ideas
on

on the subject, and that impartiality of judgment was as rarely to be found under the private's worsted lace as under the officer's embroidered jacket. Nevertheless he could not entirely prevent his mind from being tinctured with prejudice against the Highlanders, particularly when he kept in view the ungrateful neglect, for he could give it no better name, displayed by his Queensferry specimens of the Gael. At one time he had some thoughts of making a few inquiries concerning them, in which his knowledge of the name of the junior promised to be of assistance; but calling to mind, that it was not his part to make even the most trivial exertions to facilitate their future meeting, he unhesitatingly and finally dismissed the idea.

CHAPTER III.

——The land of the mountain and flood,
Where the pine of the forest for ages has stood—
Where the eagle comes forth on the wings of the storm,
And her young ones are rock'd on the high Cairngorum.
C.

THE first circumstance that promised the officers of the —— regiment a transient liberation from the monotonous duty of the fort, was the annunciation of an Inverness ball, at which such as chose to attend were offered a tempting opportunity of meeting all the “beauty and chivalry” of the Highlands.

The commanding officer, colonel Wri-
thesley, partly on account of his rank,
and partly from the reflected consequence
he derived from the noble families with
whom he was connected, had previously
been

been invited to mingle in the private parties of the neighbouring gentry ; and being anxious to make the ball-party as strong as possible, several, who had no decided wish to attend it, were, by his solicitations, induced to go.

Of this number was Clifford ; and though he anticipated but little pleasure from the amusements of the evening, he was not sorry at being enlisted in the cause, from the opportunity it promised to afford him of making, in agreeable society, an excursion he had often contemplated.

Accordingly, on the day appointed, the majority of the young men, leaving for a time the superintendence of parades to the “ old foggies,” started, full of life and gaiety, for Inverness ; and, at an hour sufficiently late to establish their claim to genteel habits, made their appearance in the crowded ball-room.

A short survey of the female part of the assembly served to convince the
English-

Englishmen, that grace and beauty might even be found in a country bordering on the frigid zone; and the Irishmen, like prodigal sons, felt half inclined to desert their father's house entirely, and, provided they could get helpmates, try if pigs would not fatten within the rocky girdle of the Grampians.

As to Clifford, he was not allowed a fair opportunity of immediately forming his opinion of Hyperborean charms; for scarcely had he entered the room, when his glance rested on a face which was instantaneously recognised. It was that of Lochullin, the youth whose life he had saved; and the recognition was mutual, for, with a start of rapture, the Highlander hurriedly apologized to the lady he was dancing with, and rushed forward to greet him.—“ My friend ! my preserver !” he exclaimed, holding out his hand; “ am I at last so fortunate as to meet you ?”

This address was warm ; but Clifford,
not-

notwithstanding sincerity was developed in the young man's face, could not reconcile his present behaviour with his preceding neglect. He therefore coolly touched the offered hand, stiffly bowed his thanks, and hoped that the gentleman experienced no bad effects from the accident he met with at the Queensferry.

The youth's eyes glistened as he noticed the indifference with which his heart-given salutation was received.—“ I can perceive how it is,” said he, in a tone of distress; “ you think me ungrateful, and so treat me as an ingrate deserves; yet, if you will but listen, I may, in a certain degree, exculpate myself from so foul a charge.”

“ There is not the smallest necessity for your attempting such a thing,” returned Clifford, whose stiffness began to give way. “ I did expect, that when you passed through Perth, you would have gratified me so far as to have personally

sonally announced your perfect recovery ; but no doubt you had good reasons for the omission."

" When I passed through Perth ! was it then in Perth I should have found you ?" exclaimed the young Highlander, with evident astonishment and regret. " How very, very unfortunate ! for I halted fully two days in that town. But the truth of the matter was this :—my friend, Glen Eynort, in the midst of his confusion and anxiety on my account, by some mischance, lost or destroyed the card on which was inscribed your name ; and, as if to crown the whole, his memory dealt so treacherously with him, that he could neither recall it to his remembrance, nor decide whether you were bound for Perth, Inverness, or John-o'-Groats. In vain did he rack his brain, and in vain did I reproach. All he could trust himself to say was, that he thought you intended quitting the coach at Perth, and from thence penetrating

trating into the Western Highlands, either to visit a friend, or to gratify your taste for the magnificence of nature, in a ramble over the Perth and Argyleshire hills. This last surmise was the most satisfactory I could draw from him; and when it was corroborated by the guard of the coach, I no longer hesitated in giving it implicit credence. Nothing therefore could be done, but to pursue my journey northward, in grievous disappointment, and trust to fortune for throwing you in my way. This it has at last done, but, I fear, at too late a period to leave it in my power to atone for past offences."

"Say no more," said Clifford, in a voice that at once proclaimed his suspicions were dissipated. "A much less elaborate and less sufficient apology would have served to make me ashamed of my behaviour. On your friend's memory lie the blame, and be the circumstance remembered no more."

“ Then I must include Glen Eynort in the act of grace you are so ready to extend,” said Lochullin, a smile of delight once more spreading over his countenance ; “ for I can vouch for the annoyance and pain his forgetfulness has occasioned him. During the few days he was tied down as my nurse, he altered his mind regarding the prosecution of his journey homeward ; and when I was restored to my former strength, left me to proceed alone, and retraced his steps to Edinburgh. He assigned some transactions of moment he had neglected to settle prior to his departure, as his reason for so doing ; but to this moment I am satisfied, in my own mind, that it was solely with a view to rectify, if possible, his carelessness of your address. This however he found impracticable ; and had not accident favoured me, I question if we should have ever met.”

“ Then, to prevent all hazard of such
a mis-

a misfortune again occurring," said Clifford, "I shall now hand the remembrancer over to you."

"And in return for the uneffaceable manner in which these characters shall be stamped on my heart," said the other, as he ran his eyes over the card, "may I entreat lieutenant Clifford to charge his memory with the name of Æneas Macara of Lochullin?"

Clifford readily gave an assurance that he had great pleasure in so doing; upon which the frank-hearted Highlander, as he took his arm, said—"Then, now that we are friends, let us no longer deprive Glen Eynort of his due share of the satisfaction I experience. He is at the other end of the room, buried, as usual, in a clustre of our mountain belles, and totally ignorant of the agreeable surprise awaiting him."

They accordingly sauntered to that part of the room where, surrounded by

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a crowd

a crowd of ladies, to whom he was dealing out compliments by wholesale, Glen Eynort was seated.

The moment he caught a glimpse of Clifford, his colour heightened to the deepest crimson, and he instantly freed himself from the fair circle, and with a ready hand came forward to meet him. —“ I am rejoiced to find,” said he, “ that my inadvertent fault has not proved irreparable. Lochullin, I trust, has advocated my cause, as far as it admits of extenuation.”

“ I have explained every thing,” exclaimed Lochullin, whose spirits had received a powerful stimulant in the rencontre, “ and our generous friend willingly extends the olive-branch to all, notwithstanding he was at first a little crusty. Clifford, my good sir, was the name you so unfortunately let slip your memory ; and this, Mr. Clifford, is my kinsman, Macrimmon of Glen Eynort.”

This introduction over, and some trivial

vial observations made by each, Lochullin again took the arm of the Englishman.—“ There is another individual in the room,” said he, as they moved on, “ to whom I must introduce you without delay. Come here, Unn,” and he motioned to a graceful young female, at a short distance, who instantly approached ; when, taking her hand, he put it into that of his companion, adding, as he did so—“ This, Mr. Clifford, is my sister, Unn Macara ; and in this gentleman, Unn, you see the generous and intrepid Englishman who was the means of saving my life at the Queensferry.”

The timidity and diffidence incidental to her sex and age, for she was but a mere girl, probably shortened the lady’s acknowledgments ; but what she did say was to the purpose, and delivered in a voice that could scarcely fail to please. She was too young to have established her claim to beauty, but the germs were

already beginning to develop themselves ; and though not promising to be exactly of that style Clifford admired, he could discern that a considerable proportion was likely, some day, to fall to her share. In order to leave Lochullin at liberty to divide his attentions, he solicited her to join the dance, and they stood up accordingly.

When the company began to disperse, he again found the young Highlander at his side.—“ I am sorry,” said he, “ that the nature of the evening’s amusement has kept us so much asunder ; but hope that for the self-denial I have been compelled to display, I shall yet be amply remunerated. Does my acquaintance yet authorize me to inquire how you are to be occupied to-morrow ?”

“ I intended devoting it to a survey of the town and neighbourhood,” answered Clifford ; “ and if that proves amusing, to make an excursion as far as
the

the Fall of Foyers on the ensuing day. That done, I return to the fort."

"Then you cannot have a better *cicerone* than myself," said Lochullin, eagerly; "and at any hour in the morning you please to fix upon, I shall be in attendance. Were it not that I am dependent on hospitality myself at present, I would not submit to lose sight of you; but I trust, before we again part for any length of time, that some scheme may be adopted for giving me an opportunity of cultivating more extensively a friendship I so anxiously aspire to."

Clifford returned a suitable reply; and after intimating the hour at which he should be ready to commence his perambulations, they separated for the night, mutually prepossessed in each other's favour.

True to his appointment, Lochullin made his appearance at the hotel where Clifford had passed the night, before the latter had fully discharged his duty at

the breakfast-table, which he had beleaguered in conjunction with his brother-officers.

This momentous point carried, to the total discomfiture of eggs, beef-steaks, haddocks, tea, and toast, they sallied forth; and in the course of the day, not only circumambulated the whole town, but took a bird's-eye view of it from every accessible eminence in its environs, not forgetting the singularly-shaped and insulated hill of Tomnaheurich, nor the vitrified crest of Craig Phatric.

Unlike most other Caledonians, Lochullin exaggerated no beauty, and concealed no defect. The scene lay spread before his companion's eyes, and he merely gave such local information as was requisite to make him more fully comprehend it.

Clifford's glance wandered up hill and down dale, till it got fatigued with gazing on a prospect full of so much sublimity and grandeur; to form which,
wood

wood and water, rock and mountain, each contributed their share ; while, at the junction of the three great valleys, which, like the rays of a star, diverged east, west, and south, before him sat Inverness, the radiant nucleus of the whole.

The following day, as Clifford had projected, was devoted to visiting Loch Ness and the Fall of Foyers, which cost both a hard day's riding, but from which the Englishman returned highly gratified, and more and more delighted with the sternly-magnificent character of Highland scenery. Culloden Moor, the field on which the last Stuart fought his last battle, was also visited in his way back to the fort ; and thus far Lochullin escorted him, to point out to his southern eye the green spots sprinkled over the dark heath, and to tell, that under them reposed the more fortunate colleagues of those men, who

“ Stood to the last ; and when standing was o’er,
All sullen and silent, resign’d the claymore ;
And yielded, indignant, their necks to the blow,
Their homes to the flame, and their lands to the foe.”

Clifford saw, in these patches of verdure, a more affecting memorial of the slain, than if he had been looking on the proudest mausoleum earthly hands could raise ; for it seemed to his imagination as though, in keeping them perpetually green, Nature had stamped on that black moor an imperishable record of her aversion to strife existing between men born in the same land. Considerably more than half-a-century has elapsed since human blood irrigated those heart-speaking spots, yet their hue is as rich as though it had been only shed a year ; and bright and unfading will it remain, till the last trumpet shall call upon Cul-loden to give up its dead.

Before Lochullin parted with his companion, he said, in reference to a previous arrangement made betwixt them—

“ Then,

“ Then, ten days hence, you meet me at Inverness, content to submit yourself entirely to my guidance; and with a fowling-piece in your hand, to risk your limbs in a fortnight’s ramble over our rugged hills?”

“ So you have settled,” said Clifford, “ and I anticipate too much pleasure from my peregrination to retract my assent.”

“ Then,” said the Highlander, “ get decked out in a shooting-jacket, on Tuesday the twenty-sixth, and transport yourself to Inverness, by what means you may. After that, I regulate our progress in every respect; so take care you make no provision for the future, beyond the hour that sees you quartered in Cant’s Hotel.”

They exchanged adieus and parted; Lochullin to keep an engagement in the neighbourhood of Inverness, which, for the sake of his new friend, he had part-

ly broken, and the other to resume the humdrum duty of the fort.

In the course of the three days they had been together, Clifford had obtained, from the frank and communicative Highlander, and that too without the smallest solicitation, such information respecting him and his connexions as was sufficient to satisfy moderate curiosity. He was yet a minor and an orphan, heir to a handsome property, the most extensive, but not the most valuable part of which lay on the north-west coast of the island. On this there still remained an old mansion, the stronghold of his ancestors; and he was anxious his English friend should have ocular proof of the vast quantities and varied descriptions of game its bleak moors and hill-slopes sheltered; but he seldom or never made it a place of residence. The spot he had hitherto been habituated to regard as his home was Dun Rimmon Castle, the
abode

abode of sir Colin Macrimmon, his maternal grandfather and guardian. One of the principal objects he had in view, when he proposed the excursion before alluded to, was to introduce his preserver to this old chieftain, who, notwithstanding his hereditary antipathy to the Sas-senach, would, he doubted not, for once make a son of the slighted race a welcome guest at his board.

Such was the sum of the family *exposé* Clifford was favoured with; and so much had every thing conspired to recommend the young Highlander to his regard, that frequently, before the expiration of the ten days that intervened between their separation and the period appointed for their future meeting, he caught himself marvelling at the laziness with which the wheels of time performed their diurnal revolution.

At length the wished-for morning arrived; leave of absence was readily granted

granted him, and, equipped as had been advised, he reached the hotel in Inverness.

Lochullin was in waiting for him, and similarly prepared, only that he wore tartan, and the national bonnet, totally unornamented.—“ Aware,” said he, after they had exchanged greetings, “ that there is nothing more to interest you in Inverness, I have every thing arranged for our immediate departure. There is a tolerably-good horse ready for each of us, and the old Highlander who acts as our groom will take charge of what little luggage you may have brought. This night we shall sleep at a small hamlet on the road, and to-morrow, I hope, within the walls of Dun Rimmon. I expected, at one time, we should have had Glen Eynort’s company ; and, to induce him to delay his return for a day or two, held out the lure of your society ; but he said he could not bring himself
to

to permit my sister to cross the hills unescorted, and so set off with her three days ago."

"He could scarcely have had a better excuse," said Clifford; "and I begin to apprehend that your delaying for me has put you and others to more inconvenience than you are willing to acknowledge."

"By no means," returned Lochullin. "It was a mere whim in Glen Eynort to fancy Unn required such a squire, more especially when she had a careful clansman for an attendant. However, one advantage will accrue from his proving our *avant-courier*. He will announce your approach to my grandfather, and pave the way for your receiving a hearty reception. I do not attempt to conceal that sir Colin is, in a certain degree, infected with those antiquated prejudices which have been on the decay for the last century, and are now nearly rooted out; and that he is apt to imagine

gine worth and honour are in a measure peculiarly the Gael's inheritance. But of this failing I am sure you will be permitted to discern nothing ; and had you even no claims on his regard, on my account, I am well aware Glen Eynort's recommendation would obtain it for you."

The conclusion of this speech, in giving an insight into the character of sir Colin Macrimmon, did not increase Clifford's pleasurable anticipations. He began to suspect that he should find more enjoyment in beating the hills for game, than in partaking of the hospitality of Dun Rimmon Castle, and felt nowise elated at the idea of being indebted to the good report of Glen Eynort for a civil reception. These cogitations however he could not divulge ; much less could he resolve to incur the charge of instability and fickleness, by declining to adhere to his engagement. The preparations for their journey, therefore, went
on ;

on ; and when completed, they took their departure.

Long before they had lost sight of the Firth of Beaully, Clifford could perceive that the small country horses on which they rode were not only mettlesome and pleasant in their movements, but particularly calculated for a hilly district, and capable of enduring much fatigue. From his companion he learned that they were the property of sir Colin, who prided himself on having a fine and numerous stud of the native breed ; but when it was added, that greater part of them were allowed to run wild amongst the hills, and rarely, either in summer or winter, knew the luxury of a stable, his respect for this department of the baronet's establishment suffered a sensible diminution.

Donald Darroch, their squire, also owed fealty to the old chief ; and to discern that he belonged to the same country and master as the *gerrans*, one look
at

at his rough stunted form and ancient frosty face was sufficient. He shewed a particular aversion either to attempt speaking, or confessing that he understood, English ; and when he inadvertently made a *lapsus linguæ* in that respect, fully authenticated his claim to ignorance by the unintelligible jargon he made use of.

The rapidity of their progress, and the attention the Englishman conceived it requisite to pay to his steed, on account of the hilly tract they had to traverse, necessarily precluded much conversation. Clifford soon found himself in a country totally unknown ; and in vain did he endeavour to acquire some notion of its topography ; for no sooner had Lochullin set about enlightening him, than a string of wild Gaelic names stepped in to increase his perplexity. He had therefore no alternative, but to submit to be hurried on, blindfold as it were ; and many a hill did he climb—many a winding glen
did

did he traverse, before, with the sunset, he hailed Ardgy, the hamlet in which they were to pass the night. It lay on the margin of a lake of inconsiderable breadth, but several miles in length; and a strong and lofty girdle of mountains, on the slopes of which the dwarf oak and the birch grew in great abundance, encompassed the whole. Five or six miserable huts composed the *clachan*, and of these the public-house or inn was the chief. It stood on a green knoll, apart from the rest; and though in a state of dilapidation, shewed, in the superiority of its plan and construction, that it had originally been intended, as Lochullin said, for a shooting-box, to a proprietor who thought his Highland estates only worth a visit when the grouse were fit for killing. When this sensible man returned to his native dust, an heir stepped into his shoes, who had even more worldly wisdom in his composition; for, looking upon every thing north of Cheviot

viot as savage and barbarous, he never set foot on Scottish ground, but left all to the management of a factor, who knew both sides of a shilling too well to undeceive him.

In consequence of this total desertion, the once trim cottage of Ardgry fell fast to ruin ; and, at last, when it contained scarcely one apartment impervious to the rain, was let, at a few shillings annually, as a house of entertainment ; of which metamorphosis a tall pole, fixed in the centre of a cairn of stones, duly informed the public.

The landlord, whom Lochullin saluted by the name of Murdoch Bain, and who spoke English nearly as well as Donald Darroch, was a squat little man, habited in coarse hodden gray, and with a mobility of scalp and activity of gesture truly extraordinary. He exhibited great joy at the arrival of the party, and, out of sheer good-nature, remained bustling about the room, and putting in a word
occasion-

occasionally, for a full half-hour; anxious no doubt that the gentlemen should feel the lapse of time as little as possible while waiting for the loch trout and mutton ham he had promised for their supper.

“And now,” said Lochullin, when the obsequious and considerate host at length retired, “I believe it is full time to ask you what you think of the Highlands; for, until to-day, you may be said to have seen them only as Moses saw the land of Canaan.”

“If I am to form my opinion,” replied Clifford, “from the country I have this day passed over, I must unreservedly declare, that it is to the full more gloomy, rugged, and desolate, than I anticipated. From the moment we lost sight of the really-beautiful scenery which embosoms the greatestuaries of the east coast, I have seen nothing but an endless succession of black sterile hills, gray melancholy rocks and dells, such
as

as at every sweep one may expect to meet banditti, or, mayhap, one of Ossian's spectre-chiefs. In good truth, I hope fate will permit me to pass my days among less majestic scenery, and where I have a chance of seeing more of the 'human face divine.'

Lochullin laughed as he said—"I find you prefer being conscientious to smoothing your words down to a standard likely to suit my national prepossessions; nevertheless I do assure you, that that same frank and unstudied manner of giving an opinion is one of the points I most admire in the English character. Our day's ride has indeed been, for the greater part, over an unseemly track; but I trust, before the close of to-morrow, you will begin to think the country improves. Had I not apprehended that you would have found the accommodations for the night too miserable to be put up with, I would have taken a nearer and perhaps more pleasant route.

Ardgy

Ardgy is bad, but it is a palace, in comparison to the shealing on Ben Vhragie."

"Then it is as well we avoided it," said Clifford, looking first at the green mildewed walls, and then at the rotten fractured flooring. "I do not much heed bad quarters at a time, but I hold it as a maxim, that it is proper to rest satisfied with such only when no better can be had. Besides, had we taken another road, I should have been deprived of a sight of this strange biped we have got for a landlord; and a glance at his extraordinary phiz is well worth a few miles riding any day."

"Ha, honest Murdoch!" exclaimed Lochullin, "I suspected, from the first, that his eccentricities would not go without a place in your tablets. He is certainly a rare specimen of a Highland inn-keeper; and did you mutually and thoroughly understand each other, you would soon discover that it is not in the outward man alone his singularity lies."

He

He has been accustomed to see me pay his house periodical visits, ever since I made my first appearance at the Inverness academy, with scarcely sufficient knowledge in my noddle to know A from B, and on that account thinks he has a sort of right to be what you may term officious and presuming; but which I, knowing the character and nature of the man, look upon as springing from genuine kindness of heart and harmless curiosity. Amongst these solitudes, it would require a mind more rudely framed than I believe any Highland gentleman possesses, harshly to repulse civilities that really arise from respect, or refuse to gratify an innocent anxiety concerning the tumults of that world from which nature seems for ever to have shut the inquirer out. But here comes our trout and ham, which, when discussed, and duly qualified with a proper quantity of our mountain beverage, shall be the signal for our retreat to bed, especially

pecially as we have another day's hard riding before us, and must start with the lark."

Clifford assented to the judiciousness of this remark, and the conclusion of another hour saw them separate for the night, to take possession of the far-from-despicable beds the industrious helpmate of Murdoch Bain had prepared for their reception.

CHAPTER IV.
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When death's dark stream I ferry o'er,

A time that surely shall come,

In heaven itself, I'll ask no more,

But just a Highland welcome.

BURNS.

AT sunrise on the following day, after having done ample justice to the breakfast honest Murdoch took care should be in waiting, notwithstanding the darkness of an October morning, the travellers again bestrode their *gerrans*; and soon quitting the borders of Loch-na-you, pushed deeper into the wilds. His companion's affirmation had encouraged Clifford to expect a decrease in the ruggedness and desolation of the country; but, for the first half of the day, instead of diminishing in uncouth aspect, its stern features actually seemed

to

to augment. Never before had he imagined that there was any district of Great Britain so savage and sterile as that which, for six hours, he journeyed over.

With the exception of one solitary hut, termed, in the language of the country, a *shealing*, and a pedlar hurrying, as fast as his pack permitted, to more genial climes, he beheld neither habitation nor human being in all this dreary tract. A wilderness of mountains spread around like the immense waves of a fiercely-agitated ocean, for to nothing bearing a closer resemblance could be likened the constant succession of heathy ridges, that traversed the country in lofty parallel swells, and which bore to each other the most striking and perplexing similarity. Occasionally, on the more distant slopes, a few sheep relieved the eye, by slightly varying the monotonous colour of the heath, as they picked the scanty herbage that had

sprung up in the channels of the winter streams; and at one time a picturesque and glittering peak was discernible, from which, Lochullin informed him, the snow never entirely disappeared. Clifford had beheld regions of perpetual snow before; but never did the sight affect him more strongly than when, through the dim haze of the morning, he descried that lofty isolated cone, its crest reflecting the beams of the rising sun with all the brilliancy of a splendid star.

At length, after crossing a bleak elevated waste, the dismal sameness of which was only broken by a detached pile of rocks, which shot up like a fortress from the surrounding plain, a huge misshapen hill appeared in view, round whose southern shoulder the road eventually wound. From this Clifford once more obtained a view of the habitations of men, and could discover, from the manner in which the mountains in
front

front appeared to recede, that he drew near to a less rugged district. A small, thickly-populated glen, which Lochullin named Erridale, was quickly traversed; another eminence ascended, and from its summit the young Highlander, with a proud wave of his hand, pointed out Glen Rimmon.

It was a spacious and grandly-sheltered valley, about a mile and a half in breadth, and thrice as much in length. High serrated ridges enclosed it on each side, and gently-swelling pine-covered hills shut in its extremities. A smiling and translucent lake of an oblong form, and stretching nearly its whole extent, occupied the hollow of the basin; the one shore of which presented a range of precipitous cliffs, in whose fissures the birch, the guin, and the hazel, had rooted themselves; the other, verdant and extensive meadows, covered with houses, and men, and cattle.

At the extremity of the lake most

remote from the point from whence the travellers first looked down on it, and perched on an elevated wood-clad steep, appeared a gray and ancient tower, looking down from its eyrie like the guardian of the scene; and near to it, and on the same mount, a mass of chimneys and turrets peeped out from amongst the dark pines in which they lay embosomed. Lochullin anticipated the question of his companion, and, with a smile of pleasure at his unrepressed admiration, said—"You are right—the Dun is before us."

When Clifford had fully comforted his eyesight for the recent penance it had undergone, by a long and minute survey of this delightful scene; and when, as became him, he had made ample atonement for previous doubts, they descended into the valley, and by the cultivated shore of the loch, proceeded on towards the castle.

Such of the peasants as they encountered

tered greeted Lochullin in Gaelic, and it was easy to perceive that the greeting came spontaneously from the heart ; nor did the youth seem insensible to their homage, for he had a kind word and a smile for all, and had invariably the pleasure of seeing the latter reflected back in the transient expansion of the clansman's usually - contracted brow. From witnessing these interchanges of reciprocal regard, Clifford mentally came to acknowledge that there might be joys and binding ties in the Highlands, of which hitherto he had entertained no suspicion.

Before they commenced the ascent of the mount on which the castle was situated, they had to cross a large and noisy stream, which, sweeping round its base in a deep trough, over-arched with thick and luxuriant coppice-wood, ultimately discharged itself into the loch. The deep hollow sound rising from its waters, Clifford attributed to the ca-

vernous bed over which it ran; but Lochullin assured him that it was the mellowed voice of a distant cataract, which, as if nature had resolved to embellish that secluded valley to the utmost, also displayed its grandeur within the rocky boundaries. Over the narrow gully in which the stream flowed was flung a rude but secure bridge; and by this reaching the slope of the Dun, they quickly ascended it by a winding path, and piercing through the umbrageous mantle of wood that clothed its brow, at length stood on the open space before the spacious and hereditary dwelling of the chiefs of Macrimmon.

Clifford had scarcely reined in the animal he rode (which was no doubt anxious to get rid of him), and cast a hasty glance along the front of the mansion, ere the gate was thrown open, and Glen Eynort made his appearance. He had a smile and a welcome ready for them, but the Englishman thought the
former

former sat so ill on his face, that he would have given the latter much more credit for sincerity, if they had never been conjoined. This opinion, however, he did not conceive it his duty to promulgate; and leaving the horses to the care of Donald Darroch, they all three entered the castle with every show of satisfaction.

Clifford would have preferred an hour's solitude to an immediate presentation to sir Colin Macrimmon, but this wish he did not venture to express, in case its indulgence might throw him out of the chief's good graces, and detract from the warmth of his reception; so, unbrushed, and in his travelling-dress, he was ushered into his presence.

As he had been led to expect, he found sir Colin a majestic old man, with a hoary head, and a severe and venerable countenance. He met his guest at the door of the apartment in which he waited to receive him, apologized that his

age prevented him from tendering a welcome on the threshold of the outer gate, and then shook his hand as that of the friend and preserver of his grandson.

There was an evident stateliness in his manner, notwithstanding the courtesy of his words; but, on the whole, it became his years and appearance so well, and was so free from hauteur and pomposity, that Clifford readily forgave it, and framed his replies accordingly. The chief was pleased to approve of what he said, in return for his hospitable salutation; and in proof of it, proceeded to present him to such members of his family as he was still unacquainted with.

These were confined to two individuals; for of Miss Unn, who was also waiting to give him welcome, he was already entitled to claim previous knowledge. The first introduced was Miss Marjory Macrimmon, a maiden lady, daughter to sir Colin, and conspicuously
on

on the wrong side of forty. In stature she had taken after her father, being the next thing to gigantic for a woman ; but what nature had kindly conferred in height, she had detracted from in breadth ; for in slimness and hardness of form, she bore a striking similitude to five feet ten inches of a deal-board. An expression of insufferable disdain sat continually on her skinny visage, and pretty plainly told the visitor not to come “ between the wind and her nobility ” with his unbrushed boots ; but this intimidating look was so happily modified by the ridiculous turn given to it by an inveterate squint, that he whom it was intended to annihilate, actually comforted himself with the idea, that the grim portrait of a bonneted chief, on the opposite wall, was the object of her aversion. Her dress betrayed her innate conviction, that “ beauty, when unadorned, is adorned the most ; ” and the volume of Pope, which lay

open on the sofa, from which she had newly risen, announced her as an erudite and literary character.

The other was Miss Lillias Macara, another sister of Lochullin's, but at least a couple of years older than Unn. She might be seventeen—had her brother's silky auburn hair and blue eyes, and a face, in contour and expression, so wholly her own, that the bright complexions of England and the brunettes of Spain, by which Clifford had formerly regulated his standard of female beauty, in an instant lost all influence over his opinions, and gave precedence to the Highland girl. Had all the others been mute, and her gentle tones and heart-elicited words alone hailed his arrival at Dun Rimmon, the stranger-guest could not have desired more indisputable assurance that he was welcome.

When half-an-hour of his society and conversation had, in a certain degree, familiarized the company in the parlour

to

to both—when sir Colin had convinced himself, that, for a Saxon born to the south of Cheviot, he was bearable; and Miss Marjory had discovered, with her squinting eye, that he had dark curling hair, eyes of a similar hue, a pleasant and expressive face, and an unexceptionable person—he proposed to Lochullin to retire, and make some alteration in his apparel before the dinner-hour. When in the bedchamber, to which the latter conducted him, the young Highlander said—“ Now you are domesticated under this roof, at least for a time, and however limited that time may be, I trust it is but the forerunner of many a longer visit. Keep in mind, whenever you feel inclined for withdrawing from the tumult and discontent invariably attendant on general society, that this apartment awaits you at Dun Rimmon, where, in comparative retirement, you may acquire a new zest for those public scenes that have partially satiated ;

satiated; nor will you find our secluded life so totally destitute of interest as you imagine. While we remain at the castle, we form no despicable society within ourselves: sir Colin is a man of information and abilities, and if you are given to historic research, particularly regarding the Celtic tribes, or have the least turn for antiquities, his own stores of knowledge and his library will be wholly at your service, and himself looked upon as the obliged party, in having an opportunity of displaying them."

"I am sorry that neither of the pursuits you name are decidedly to my taste," said Clifford; "but that I shall have plenty of amusement independent of them, I have not the least cause to doubt."

"You are very good to take us upon trust," returned Lochullin; "but I have first brought in view what my grandfather can contribute, not from an idea
of

of its precedence in worth, but merely because he ranks as our head. After him comes aunt Marjory, who will give you the genealogy of every family in the North who bears a Highland patronymic; and to shew the variety of her studies, will enlighten you with elaborate criticisms on the works of every son of the muses who has strung his lyre, no matter in what land, from Homer down to Scott. The girls—I mean Lillias and Unn, will sing and dance, when music or a reel is the whim of the moment. Glen Eynort will lead the hunting-field, and look to the circulation of the bottle after dinner; and I, having no source of pleasing particularly within myself, shall assist all in turn."

"I shall assuredly deserve no pity, if I shew any symptoms of ennui, when such varied talents conspire to drive it away," said Clifford, laughing. "But what dissonant sounds are those ascending

ing from below? The whole castle rings again with the hideous noise, yet you appear to give it no attention."

Lochullin, in his turn, laughed immoderately.—“ My good sir,” said he, “ if you go on thus, abusing you know not what, I have no hope that you and sir Colin will remain friends two days. Why, God help your southern ears! that is Caethel Doun Mackennachar piping us to dinner, and never yet has a chief of Macrimmon eat a meal without that accompaniment. To be sure, *I* find little difference in the viands, whether I swallow them to the stirring notes of the pibroch, or in solemn silence; but that is no rule, for my grandfather seldom lets a day pass without plainly telling me that the stock has degenerated by admixture with the blood of Macara; and I will be bound to prove that neither he nor Glen Eynort sit down to table in form if the pipe is silent. But, between ourselves, I think
Glen

Glen Eynort's fastidious adherence to this ancient custom arises principally from respect to the prejudices of the old chief, whose title and estates he looks forward to as his inheritance."

"Indeed!" said Clifford, with some surprise; "I had no idea that matters stood so. I had begun to conjecture that the title was likely to become extinct with him who presently bears it, but never doubted but that the estates would ultimately fall into your possession."

"These suppositions originated in your ignorance of our family history," observed Lochullin, who was in a communicative vein; "and in order to prevent similar misconceptions in future, I will sketch off as much of it as will suffice to enlighten you. To heirs-male alone descends the property of Macrimmon; and as far as is at present known, Glen Eynort, though but a distant branch, is the nearest claimant, both to
it

it and to the baronetcy, which ranks amongst the most ancient in the realm. Sir Colin had but one son, and for many years saw in him the future pride of his name, and the link by which the long unbroken chain was to be continued down to the latest posterity; but death thought it had been sufficiently lengthened out, I suppose, and so swept off poor uncle Norman to the shades below, in his thirtieth year. Glen Eynort was at that time a youth with a scanty income, and resident in Edinburgh, where he was qualifying himself for the Scottish bar; but the moment my grandfather came to recognise in him the presumptive heir to his name and fortune, he issued an interdict against his defiling his fingers with any employment whatsoever, and, in order to remunerate him for the probable loss he sustained in quitting a lucrative and honourable profession, allows him a handsome addition to his own narrow patrimony. As the world

world goes, I dare say you will give me no credit for sincerity, when I add, that this distribution gives me more satisfaction than would the assurance that a future day would see the properties of Macrimmon and Lochullin united; yet such is actually the truth. Thanks to my paternal grandfather, who spent more than half his life in India, I inherit more than sufficient to satisfy my most avaricious wishes, as far as regards myself. My sisters are less liberally provided for, it is true; but, with sir Colin's assistance, I have no fear of not being able to augment their portions to a respectable amount. Looking upon me as but of a puny constitution, sir Colin, I am well aware, has a speculation in his head of marrying Lillias to Glen Eynort, and so, in the event of my premature demise, aggrandizing his family name, by enriching his successor with the estates of Lochullin. For my own part, though Glen Eynort is not exactly

exactly a man after my heart, I have no aversion to his wishes in this respect meeting with all the success he could desire; but I shrewdly infer there is a chance of opposition from a quarter of which the chieftain has not at present the most remote suspicion. Lillias, I am confident, has no partiality for Glen Eynort; yet there is no calculating on her ultimate decision, for Ninian is noted for his conquests, and well skilled in all the arts that attract and win the female heart. But the strain of Caethel Doun's pipe warns me that I have scarcely time to make a trivial arrangement in my dress—so I must drop this womanish garrulity and decamp.”

He accordingly withdrew, but, after a short absence, returned to conduct his friend to the dining-room, or banquetting-hall, as aunt Marjory styled it. They found sir Colin and the ladies merely waiting for their presence to sit down to table, and, as a mark of respect,

Clifford

Clifford was called to a seat on the right-hand of the chief, while his antiquated daughter flanked him on the other side, and, by the artillery of tongue and eye, endeavoured to amuse him during the meal. Glen Eynort had the more agreeable station of being near the Misses Macara, whom Miss Marjory evidently looked upon as children utterly incapable of giving any pleasure by their conversation. The dinner-table was rather plenteously than splendidly loaded, the viands being chiefly such as the neighbouring country produced; and though such ancient customs as decidedly militated against the distinctive habits of modern society were not adhered to, there were still a sufficient number retained to make it a singular spectacle to the Englishman. The salt no longer stood in the centre of the table as the Rubicon which the vassal dared not pass, neither did the food degenerate in quality below it; but Caethel Doun, a
thickset,

thickset, bandy-legged, dwarfish Highlander, wholly equipped in the national costume, sailed up and down the hall during the whole time, like a turkey-cock in full feather, and playing the pibroch so furiously and indefatigably, that more than once the stranger was nigh starting from the table in absolute despair, and flying, he cared not whither, so his ears were no longer persecuted by his merciless pipe.

The evening passed over much the same as Clifford had been accustomed to. Deserting Glen Eynort and the bottle at an early hour, he found a piano in the drawing-room, and excellent performers in the young ladies. Nor was this the only instrument whose tones made amends for the grating sounds he had previously been condemned to listen to. Sir Colin commanded a splendid harp to be brought forth, as the only rival worthy of the bagpipe, and Lillias was called upon to touch its chords, in
accompaniment

accompaniment to her own voice. From her songs being in the Gaelic language, Clifford was of course precluded from enjoying their originality and pathos; but in listening to the airs alone he derived more pleasure than he remembered ever to have done from any similar performance in his native tongue.

When the annunciation of supper ended the harmony, he found an accidental inquiry had brought down a long and intricate disquisition from sir Colin, tending to prove the authenticity of the poems of Ossian, and to refute the sceptical opinions entertained respecting the validity of Macpherson's translation. In this aunt Marjory frequently joined, but in such a way as to invariably incur the censure of the old chief, whose national spirit could ill brook to hear the Gaelic bard contrasted with the poetasters of later years, whom, one and all (with the exception of an obscure son of the Celtic

Celtic muse, called Rob Doun, or Brown Rob), he heartily despised.

From what he could learn of Rob Doun Mackay, Clifford understood that he had been the Burns of the North Highlands—a poor and humble man, whose genius had burst forth through all the obstacles that had conspired to crush it, and had, through the medium of his simple lyre, entwined his name with the language, the prejudices, the hills, and the streams of his native country. Like the disputed strains of Ossian, his were published to his countrymen by recitation alone, and, since his death, are preserved from oblivion chiefly by the same means, and amongst the same people. Like Burns, his fame is posthumous, and like the Ayrshire bard, he of Durness, in Sutherland, is to have justice done him but in the tomb. In his native parish (a parish whose cliffy shores act as a barrier against the cold
and

and stormy ocean that laves Cape Wrath), a monument either has been, or is about to be, erected to his memory : thus while the marble tells, in Dumfries, that the Lowland poet slumbers on the southern confines of the land his muse adorns, admiration has similarly inscribed the name of him who sung to the Gael on one of its most northern promontories.

The three days which succeeded that of the Englishman's arrival at Dun Rimmon, with little variation, passed over as the first had done ; only that the mornings were devoted to beating the hills for game, or to angling for trout in the lake. Clifford found his new mode of life so agreeable, and his friends, especially the female part and Lochullin, so attentive to making the lapse of time unobserved, that he felt no anxiety to vary the one, or to accelerate the flight of the other. Glen Eynort was the only individual who deteriorated in his opi-

nion ; for regarding sir Colin, aunt Marjory, and perhaps Unn, it was stationary—but from what this arose he could not even mentally decide. There was usually a gloominess about him, and at certain moments a ferocity in his eye, ill calculated to inspire confidence, or invite familiarity ; but as this was never pointedly directed against himself, but generally against offending menials, Clifford saw little or no reason why he should take it amiss. Nor did this instinctive dislike fail to augment, when he heard him the first to propose their immediate departure for Lochullin. He found his situation in the castle so pleasant, that he had begun to hope the further extension of his excursion was postponed till a future visit, and could not prevent the idea from occurring, that the morose Highlander desired to eject him as speedily as possible from his comfortable quarters. However, as Lochullin was still keen for the ramble, and had, independent

dependent of anticipated amusement, some business to transact on his property, no objection could consistently be started; and on the fourth day, therefore, he again found himself bestriding the fleetest of sir Colin's dwarfish stud, and, in company with the two Highlanders, and Glen Eynort's servant in addition to Donald Darroch, leaving Glen Rimmon at a hard canter. Once without the rocky zone that encircled it, they plunged into those bare upland wilds, of which he had had a specimen in the outset of his jaunt. Their horses heads were turned northward, and whether it really was the case, or whether it was that he no longer basked in the sunshine of Lillias Macara's glance, shall not here be determined; but certainly Clifford did believe that the cold increased in a prodigious ratio.

The first object that diverted his eye from dull moors and naked rocks, on which even moss refused to vegetate,

was the great western ocean; but no longer sheltered by the mountains, the biting and desolate wind that swept over it chilled every pleasurable sensation, and made him rejoice when an elevated promontory again shut it out for a short space. Their proximity to the coast, however, rather increased than diminished the difficulty of their progress. The hill-paths they depended on generally lay in the hollow of ravines, which, in heavy rains, or during the melting of the snow, were the beds of torrents, and were choked with loose and jagged blocks of stone hurled down from the neighbouring cliffs; and when these were occasionally left for the summit of the precipices, it was only exchanging comparative security for absolute peril, and risking a watery grave in the green billows, some hundred feet below, instead of a broken neck, by the accidental stumble of a horse.

Nor was it alone in the ruggedness of
the

the road, and barbarous aspect of the country, that Clifford discerned a similitude to scenes his imagination had sketched as existing only on the outskirts of the habitable earth. On the coast they frequently fell in with clusters of huts, and in these the same savage and primitive features were perceptible. Usually they stood in a clump of three or four, and in the centre of a few misshapen patches of cultivated ground, over which wandered herds of dwarf-cattle, and horses covered with long shaggy hair. Almost without exception, they were dark, smoky hovels, constructed of alternate layers of stone and turf, and roofed with thin sods pared from the adjacent heath. To keep the wind from displacing these, ropes made of heather were slung across the whole of the edifice to the amount of several score; and at the end of these were suspended huge stones, to preserve their regularity of position, and to create a

proper degree of pressure on the *divots*. In general, no particular aperture, either for the admission of light, or emission of smoke, was discernible; but when such became necessary for either of these purposes, a sod was pushed aside in the roof, and with the darkness departed the risk of suffocation. All had circular ends, each man requiring to have his own kiln, from the ancient habit of grinding grain in the hand-mill, or *quern*, still prevailing; and this peculiarity gave them, when clubbed together, to an English eye, a striking resemblance to the representation given by travellers of a Hottentot kraal.

In the occupants of these miserably-fashioned dwellings, there were fewer distinctive marks of uncivilized life than their seclusion led Clifford to expect. For the most part they were habited like Lowlanders, in cloth of hodden-grey, of their own manufacture; children and boys only wearing the kilt or phillabeg.

labeg. When in the house, they were commonly employed in putting together rude articles of furniture, or in mending nets or implements of husbandry. Out of doors, they were either at sea in their fishing-boats, tending the cattle on the hills, or turning up the scanty and hungry soil with the *cascroim*, an ancient and singularly-shaped spade.

But very different in exterior aspect from these mean abodes was Lochullin's hereditary home. It sat perched, like an eagle, on a lofty and jutting precipice, that impended over the restless waves; and though aged and gloomy, yet wore a proud and imposing look. When they came in view of it, Glen Eynort was leading the van in unsocial silence; Lochullin, therefore, unrestrained by the presence of a third person, said to Clifford, in his usual open way—"Yonder it stands, the old crazy pile that has seen ten stout-hearted generations of Macaras pass to the grave. Would you

believe it, my friend, I gaze on those gray and tottering walls with more genuine pleasure than on all the majesty of Dun Rimmon, with its woods and its waterfalls, its sunshine and its shelter?"

"There are associations which endear any spot," replied Clifford; "and were Castle Ullin mine by inheritance, I doubt not but I should discover, in its shaken battlements and exposed situation, beauties which I cannot now describe. But methinks this part of your property has little besides hereditary partiality to recommend it, for never did my eyes behold a district apparently so desolate and unproductive."

"I have certainly nothing to boast on that score," said Lochullin; "yet barren and bleak as you imagine it, there are resources for its population, which a stranger cannot well comprehend. Nevertheless, as I before mentioned, had not my paternal grandfather wisely allowed

lowed it to manage itself for some twenty years, and scraped together in India sufficient to purchase my Morayshire property, I should have been but poorly provided for this day. The premature death of my parents has also been in favour of the family estates, inasmuch as it has left, for these last ten years, an annual surplus of income, of which my sisters shall wholly reap the benefit. God knows, that rather than have lost them as I did, I would sooner have thrown myself pennyless on the world !”

“ The circumstances must have been uncommon,” observed Clifford, “ that the remembrance thus affects you, after the lapse of such a length of time.”

“ In a certain measure they were,” returned Lochullin, conceiving the observation implied a wish for further information. “ In returning to his usual place of residence in the South, from visiting this very property, my father met his death. Crossing one of the

many armlets of the sea that intersect our country, in company with a neighbouring proprietor, the boatman, who bore a mortal enmity to the latter, was conjectured to have intentionally upset the skiff in which they had embarked, solely with a view to gratify his revenge. Be this as it may, they all three perished; and my mother never recovered the shock his untimely fate occasioned, but from that moment gradually pined away, until she dropped into the grave. Thus were three helpless children left orphans; and though, as far as lies in human power, the loss has been made up to us by the unwearied attention and kindness of our remaining friends, yet still, I dare say, you will admit that it is, in a certain degree, beyond all reparation."

Readily indeed did Clifford's heart give the presumed admission; but seeing the subject was too painfully affecting to his companion to authorise him

to

to desire its continuance, he merely bowed his assent; and they finished their journey in silence.

As sportmen's accommodations were all Lochullin had come good for, and a peasant and his family the only inhabitants of his castle, there was little either of good cheer or true comfort within its forsaken walls; yet nevertheless, by one means or other, the time was made to pass agreeably enough to the stranger, to whom every thing was new. Their success against the moor-game was as great as the most insatiable fowler could desire, and occasionally Clifford had the glory of seeing a deer slain amid its native fastnesses. Nor were these their only sports, for they either, at midnight, and by the light of a log-wood torch, sallied forth to spear the salmon that abounded in the many streams that rushed from the neighbouring mountains, or, in the noonday, sailed, by the flame of the same blazing pine, into the

profound caverns that abounded on the coast, to hunt the myriads of seals that had taken refuge in their vast recesses.

To conclude all, Lochullin, with the utmost promptitude, caught at a half-implied wish his guest expressed to visit Cape Wrath; and in a stout boat, manned by a few of his hardy clansmen, they made the distant and somewhat perilous voyage. Standing on the extremity of that lofty and savage headland, the Englishman beheld the sun sink beyond the western ocean, and heard moaning at his feet those waters which stretch, without obstruction, to the polar ice.

At that moment he could have rejoiced that his reliance on the authenticity of Ossian had been as invincible as that of sir Colin Macrimmon, for he remembered that the ships of the king of Morven are represented as ploughing these waves on their voyages to and from Lochlin and Inistore. But, inde-
pendent

pendent of such belief, he could still comfort himself with the certainty that the Romans, whose emperor the Gaelic bard denominates the “king of the world,” had boldly, and while navigation was in its infancy, doubled this stormy cape, and fancifully laid down the remotest spot of earth on the surface of the globe, as but one degree farther to the north*.

But the chase, and the stern sublimity of that rugged coast, alike palled in time, and each came at length to feel an ardent desire to return to the milder beauty and exhilarating society of Glen Rimmon. As soon as Clifford acquired resolution to disclose this wish, due preparations were made; and on the seventh day from that of their departure, they were welcomed back to his castle by the old

* Fowla, or Fule, an isolated island, politically annexed to Zetland, is generally admitted as having been the *Ultima Thule* of the ancients—a supposition supported by Tacitus.

old chief.—“ It glads my heart, young men,” said he, on their arrival, and for a moment forgetting that one of the trio was a southern, “ to see you fresh from the heath, and to hear the yelping of these noble hounds. It seems to revive for a moment those days when the chiefs held council, and hunted the deer by the light of the same sun. My father (honour be to his dust for the act!) made one of the great assembly in Kintail, that met ostensibly for a grand hunt, but in reality to pave the way to the Stuart’s restoration to the throne of these realms. There was Lochiel, Clanronald, Mackenzie, Macleod, and every chief of note in the North, or his deputy, save Sutherland, the Munros, and Mackay, for which let them this day take the credit! I was but a boy, not able to lift a ferrara from the ground, even when the good cause suffered its final overthrow; but I trust, neither on that day, nor any preceding or subsequent,

quent, has the name of Macrimmon lost any of its lustre for want of my feeble support."

"And yet if he who next ranks as its chief," said Glen Eynort, with emphasis, "yields but half that support to prop its glory, even in these degenerate times, I foresee it will not decay."

"In you, Ninian," said the chieftain, complacently touching him on the shoulder, "I have a hostage that it *will not* decay; and often do I congratulate myself, that one who so truly inherits the spirit of his race, is to be hailed chief of Macrimmon when I am in the earth. Could my old eyes but see a healthy scion spring from the good old stock, I should then lay me down in contentment, and 'depart in peace.'"

His eyes wandered to his granddaughter Lillias as he spoke, and so did Glen Eynort's; but neither met in her countenance the approval, or even consciousness, they sought. She was thinking

ing of her brother, and perhaps of his English friend ; and the concluding sentence, and the expressive glance that followed it, fell equally short and pointless.

But one day more did Clifford's leave of absence permit him to spend at Dun Rimmon, and the conviction that his departure was so near made it almost a day of pain. Something was entwining itself round his heart, which he dared not investigate, or give a name, but which he felt strongly and incessantly rivetted his thoughts on this Highland valley. At times he was led to imagine it arose from having little or nothing endeared to him in the world beyond it, and that the attachment he could not conceal included every member of the chieftain's family ; but a deeper scrutiny soon convinced him of the fallacy of this idea. In sir Colin, in Glen Eynort, in aunt Marjory, nay, in Unn, there was nothing to particularly value or love.

Lochullin

Lochullin he did highly regard, but it was with that regard which can calmly speculate on separation, and reflect on future meeting, without extravagant ecstasy and delight. Who was it then that had cast that powerful spell over his lonely heart? The question was fully answered when he heard the trembling tones of Lillias Macara reiterate the warm invitation of her grandfather and brother, that he would repeat his visit—when his greedy ear drank in Lochullin's assurance, that he should, before that time, press her hand in Inverness—and when he heard her last adieu follow him faintly down the castled steep.

Lochullin accompanied him as far as the hamlet of Ardgy, and parted with evident pain; for his grateful and affectionate nature convinced him that it was his duty to value Clifford as a brother. From thence the sturdy Donald

nald Darroch was his sole escort to the fort, and the person who took charge of the pony he rode, when at his journey's end.

CHAPTER V.
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I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,  
But that this folly drowns it. *Hamlet.*

CLIFFORD had so transiently enjoyed the society of Lillias Macara, and was so superficially acquainted with her intellectual charms, that it could hardly be imagined the impression made on his heart was indelible, or that the pang of separation would retain its acuteness beyond the day on which it occurred. Nevertheless, though regret lost its poignancy, the sameness of his life in the fort was well calculated to encourage romantic castle-building; and seldom did twelve hours together pass over his head without seeing him buried in a reverie, which had her and his next visit to  
Dun

Dun Rimmon as the primary objects. He was not insensible to the folly of thus giving way to cogitations which diverted his mind from instructive and necessary pursuits, such as he had been previously in the habit of prosecuting; yet still, with all its baneful consequences staring him in the face, he could not entirely forego that sickly happiness derived from dreaming of, and sketching what might have been, and what will never be.

When winter set in with its usual severity, and covered the high mountains to the westward with a deep coating of snow, he still continued his twilight saunter on the ramparts; drawn thither by the vague hope that his glance, penetrating through the piles of cold white clouds on the horizon, might descry some loftier summit, on which the blue eyes of the Highland lady had also fixed themselves. Anxiously did he long for the spring, which was to sweep

sweep away the spotless veil in which Nature had shrouded her face; for the return of that harbinger of more genial weather was to be the signal for the repetition of his visit to Glen Rimmon. But when his watchful ear caught the rumour that went abroad of the impending departure of the regiment, a second time destined for Spain, he lost all hope, and resigned himself to the conviction that they were never more to meet. Endeavouring to shake off the inertness of mind ever attendant on such wanderings of the imagination, he adopted the advice of a brother-officer whose regard he valued, and set about increasing his knowledge of such Continental languages as were most likely to turn out to his future advantage.

Three months thus rolled over his head; and had not a letter from Lochullin revived fading recollections, there is little doubt but he would ultimately have ceased to cherish any sentiment for

Lillias

Lillias Macara, but what friendship freely dared to confess. This letter assured him of the undiminished esteem in which he was still held at Dun Rimmon, and that the day of his revisiting it would be held as a general jubilee. The old chief, it said, frequently spoke in terms of commendation of the only Sassenach he had ever been on habits of intimacy with; Glen Eynort let no occasion slip of expressing his deep regret that there was every probability the ——— regiment would soon be sent on service; aunt Marjory declared she had never met a young officer more entertaining, less conceited, or so truly alive to the beauties of poetical composition; and Lillias and Unn desired it to be told that they were daily practising new music, and teasing all the old women in the country to teach them Gaelic songs, merely that they might have a more inexhaustible budget when Mr.

Clifford

Clifford again required of them to exhibit.

Nor was the assurance that, weather permitting, the younger part of the family were to visit Inverness in a few days, the least agreeable portion of intelligence it conveyed. The name of the family with whom they were transiently to reside was also given; and a hope expressed, that if the lure thrown out by the knowledge of their proximity was not sufficient to tempt him to quit the fort for a day, an assembly about to take place would perhaps have a more powerful effect, and procure them the pleasure of an interview.

This letter put all Clifford's prudential reasoning to flight. Books were tossed aside, his studious brow relaxed, and his friend and fellow-student, lieutenant Tarleton, was strongly recommended to give his brains a holiday, and take a farewell look at the Highland ladies, before he finally exchanged  
them

them for the olive-complexioned daughters of the south of Europe. The idea of a ball, at any time, sufficed to overturn all plans of sedentary pursuit with Tarleton; he therefore obediently pitched Gil Blas and Don Quixote under the table, bawled for his servant to come and overhaul his wardrobe, and then hastened to the mess-room, to promulgate his newly-acquired information, and learn how many would bear him company to the Highland metropolis.

Unaware of the day on which his friends would actually arrive, Clifford did not set off for Inverness until the morning of that on which the assembly was to take place. Tarleton and several other officers accompanied him; and finding, on his arrival, that the family with whom the Glen Rimmon party were to take up their abode resided a few miles out of town, he dropped all idea of paying his respects until they should meet in the ball-room. Often  
did

did he unwillingly admit the idea that he should be disappointed, that nothing was more possible than that something had occurred to derange the plan hinted at in Lochullin's letter, or that at least Lillias was not of the number that had found it convenient to leave home at a season so unfavourable for travelling. The gentlemen alone were the only individuals he felt secure of meeting, and with this conviction haunting him, he joined the assembly at an early hour, anxious to refute or confirm what his fears suggested.

The room being but thinly peopled when he entered it, he had no difficulty in convincing himself that it contained neither of the friends he was in search of. That they had not yet arrived, owing to the earliness of the hour, was the most obvious and natural inference; that they would never arrive, was the whisper of his heart; and a hermit in the midst of a crowd, he alternately

VOL. I.                      G                      sauntered

sauntered about, or seated himself for a few minutes, as the restlessness of his mind prompted. Gradually the buzz of voices, and the number of flitting forms, augmented; but still he beheld not, nor heard amongst them, that for which he watched; and faint and dispirited, he was about to fly the heartless scene altogether, when suddenly his eye encountered the searching glance of Lochullin. A lady hung on his arm, and not doubting but his fears had at length proved groundless, he hastily advanced to meet them. But, alas! it was aunt Marjory whom the young Highlander supported, and his eye grew dim as he made the unwelcome discovery.

“ Well, my good sir,” said Lochullin, jocularly, when reciprocal greetings had been exchanged, “ you were determined not to turn our weak brains with self-conceit, I perceive, otherwise you would have hunted us out before now; and allowed vanity the solace of believing  
that

that we ourselves were the sole magnet of attraction in Inverness, and that the pleasure of a dance went for nothing."

"I certainly think Mr. Clifford might have taken the trouble of making a forenoon call," said aunt Marjory, drawing up her head, so as to display advantageously the charms of her long scraggy neck, and never doubting but her nephew was serious in his reprimand. "Ladies of condition expect these things, and no gentleman should neglect to shape his conduct accordingly. I believe it is Pope that says——"

"I must really take the liberty of interrupting you, my dear madam," said Clifford, who dreaded a long quotation, "and without delay endeavour to repair the unintentional breach of politeness of which I have been guilty. Lochullin most certainly did acquaint me with your present place of residence, but entirely omitted to name the probable date of your arrival. In consequence, I saw

in his letter nothing to warrant the hope of meeting you before to-night, more especially when, on reaching Inverness, I discovered that your friend's dwelling was at such a distance from town as to preclude immediate inquiry."

"Do you hear what is laid to your charge, Æneas?" said the lady, mollified more by the appearance than the words of the apologist. "You will never throw off the reckless ways of the boy, I believe, but go on blundering to your grave. Mr. Clifford, I unhesitatingly extend the olive-branch; for, with the eccentric Sterne, I look upon the facility of the heart to forgive 'as the most refined and generous pitch of virtue human nature can arrive at.'"

"Well then," exclaimed Lochullin, "in proof that you practise what you preach, and that Clifford is a convert to the same doctrine, include me in the act of amnesty you so graciously pass, and  
allow

allow Lillias and Glen Eynort to shake hands with our friend."

It was indeed Lillias, that, as if by magic, had started up by the side of her aunt, and extended her hand towards Clifford before he perceived her. A few inarticulate and incoherent words were the only reply he could make to her cordial and unaffected salutation; and so great was his surprise and discomposure at thus finding his hopes realized in the very moment they seemed to suffer total annihilation, that he omitted to bestow the necessary recognition on her companion. Glen Eynort, for a few seconds, observed him with a full steady eye, and then said, in a sneering tone—"When Mr. Clifford is at leisure, I too will claim a share of his notice."

Clifford instantly recovered his self-possession, and apologized for his absence; but though the excuse was accepted, his ear still retained recollection of the contemptuous voice in which the

Highlander had spoken. The face of Lillias however was before him—that face of gentleness and beauty which he desired no greater happiness than to look upon; and neither the sneer, nor the slight frown which bore it company, gave him protracted uneasiness. After learning that Unn had remained at home with her grandfather, he was preparing to request Lillias to be his partner in the dance, when his evil genius, in the shape of Miss Marjory, unhappily rendered it impossible.

“Mr. Clifford,” said she, moving the fan she sported to and fro before her face, as if some project occupied her mind, which she had not fully resolved to put in execution, “I presume—indeed I cannot fail to remember, that you are fond of dancing.”

“It is not likely you should, Miss Macrimmon,” replied Clifford, unsuspecting of the bliss in store for him. “While at Dun Rimmon, I more than  
once

once put your complaisance to the test, by compelling you to join in the reel when partners were scarce."

"I assure you there was no compulsion in the case," interjoined Glen Eynort, with a malicious grin. "Miss Macrimmon is as fond of dancing, as she is remarkable for the exquisite grace of her movements; in proof of which, I have not the least doubt but she will be most happy to honour you with her hand in the set now forming."

Miss Marjory lost no time in corroborating this assertion, by simpering out the words—"Most happy indeed;" adding, "there are several young men in the room, Mr. Clifford, whom a female of condition could not with propriety accept as partners, yet whom I am averse to abash by a direct refusal. Your attention puts it in my power to decline their civilities, in a manner merciful to the feelings of all parties; and be as-

sured I am not insensible of the obligation."

Clifford made no reply. He was so thunderstruck by his good fortune, that he knew not how to express his thanks, either to the lady or Glen Eynort, who was leading out Lillias, with a smile of wicked exultation curling his lip. To submit with what grace might be granted him in such exigency was the only thing left for him to do; so he handed Miss Marjory into the centre of the room, and she, nothing loth, took her place, humming, in a voice of delight—"Now tread we a measure, said young Lochinvar."

It was not till his partner had exhausted every step she knew, whether acquired by tuition or original, kicked three gentlemen on the shins with the sharp toe of the shoe of her right foot, turned the last couple in the dance, and, between the acts, recited some twenty  
lines

lines of poetry from—(he was happy she had for once forgot who)—that Clifford saw himself absolved from his sins, and released from purgatory.

To do him justice, however, it must be added, that he behaved to his tormentor with politeness and attention sufficient to establish his credit ever after as a well-bred man ; for which he had his reward in the approving and pitying glance Lillias from time to time ventured to bestow. When freed from his galling chains, he took care not to hazard the chance of being a second time the victim of such bondage ; for he instantly solicited the only hand he valued, and readily obtained the boon.

But if he was thus made happy at last, Glen Eynort's good-humour did not appear to augment with the consciousness that it was so. A heavy scowl settled on his brow, his lips occasionally quivered with sudden tremor, and from his dark grey eyes flashed at intervals a wi-

thering brightness, which all who thoroughly knew him cared not to encounter.

Lillias was not long in remarking it to her companion.—“Glen Eynort has met with something to vex him,” said she, trembling; “and I dread lest he should forget himself so far as to ruffle the harmony of the evening.”

“I could almost suspect I am the person who has raised the storm so evidently gathering,” observed Clifford. “He may owe me a grudge, for having deprived him of society he so deservedly estimates as invaluable—the society of Miss Macara.”

“Nay,” returned Lillias, in a half-offended tone, “that were arrogating too great a liberty to himself. I believe Glen Eynort is better aware of the footing on which we stand with each other, than presume to let it be seen that any act of mine can wrinkle his forehead. It is somewhat of more consequence that  
has

has roused his irascibility of temper ; and of that, I fear, we shall have speedy proof."

" Be it even something of importance that has irritated him," said Clifford, " surely he will not give way to the promptings of passion in such society."

" You little know him if you think so," replied Lillias, almost shuddering.

" Glen Eynort is cool and enduring when he imagines such conduct will avail him, nor will he in trifles act intemperately ; but once seriously thwart, or palpably circumvent him, and the tiger in his lair springs not more fatally, more surely, on his foe. In such moments, he recks not on whom his fury lights ; but a victim he must and will have, and such he has had ere now."

" Then I pray to God it may not be Tarleton !" exclaimed Clifford, discovering, for the first time, that the Highlander and his brother-officer were in serious altercation. " Miss Macara, you

must pardon me quitting you for a few minutes, until I inquire into this dispute."

"Leave them alone, if you value us!" aspirated Lillias, panting with affright. "One is enough to come under his evil eye at once."

"But that one is my friend, lady!" said Clifford, in a tone of reproach. "He is, besides, a total stranger in this multitude, and I at least must countenance him, though a *Macrimmon* prove his enemy." He arose and left her as he concluded.

In a few minutes he returned.—"I entreat Miss Macara's pardon," said he, "for the abrupt way in which I deserted her; but the seeming urgency of the case betrayed me into want of proper respect."

"Your apology is accepted," returned Lillias, "provided you faithfully relate the circumstances and issue of the dispute."

"It

“ It was a mere trifle, on the whole,” answered Clifford. “ Some lady had agreed to dance with Tarleton, but, when he proceeded to lead her out, was claimed by Glen Eynort, on the plea of a previous engagement, and in a manner not quite consonant with my friend’s ideas of politeness. From this arose an argument between them, which, I dare say, might have eventually aggravated the matter beyond reconciliation, had not your brother, to whom I had previously made Tarleton known, interfered, and, I have reason to believe, pacified the disputants. Knowing, as he does, the terms on which I am with your family, I doubt not but my friend will be the more easily appeased, and resign all thoughts of resuming the subject.”

“ My mind misgives me, if Glen Eynort will act in a manner equally deserving of commendation,” observed Lillias, as she watched him with an anxious eye. “ I do not like that grim smile  
with

with which his glance follows the object of his anger through the dance : but he is leaving the room, I perceive, from which I draw an inference favourable to peace ; the cool air and quiet of another apartment may dissipate his choler, and send him back an altered man."

Clifford hoped so too ; but an hour after, when he saw he had not returned, and that Tarleton had also disappeared, he began to apprehend evil. He was preparing to make some inquiries of Lochullin, on purpose to reassure himself, when he saw him, after speaking to a waiter, suddenly approach with evident marks of dismay in his countenance.

"That madman, Glen Eynort," said he, the moment he had drawn him aside, "has plunged us all into affliction. Mr. Tarleton and he have fought, and the former is wounded—mortally, I fear."

Clifford asked no further information. He cast but one look of grief on Lillias, and

and hurried from the room. Numbers, more enlightened than himself, were at hand to guide him to his friend, and in a few minutes he stood by the bed on which he had been laid, grasping his clammy hand.

To his great relief, the surgeon in attendance had already been able to pronounce the wound severe, but not mortal, as rumour, through Lochullin, had at first reported. The hope that a cure would ultimately be effected took away from the pain of the declaration, that, owing to a rib being fractured, it would prove tedious.

From information he afterwards acquired, Clifford discovered, that far from being appeased by the interference of Lochullin, Glen Eynort had only smoothed his brow for a time, the more thoroughly to wreak his fury on the in-offensive man he had forced into a quarrel. Retiring the moment he thought his motives would be unsuspected, he  
sent

sent a message to Tarleton by a waiter, requesting his presence in another apartment; and when the officer made his appearance, galled and insulted him in such a manner, that he readily acquiesced in the proposition to sally forth instantly; and in the moonlight, and with the pistols ready prepared by the Highlander, settled their dispute in the same hour it had taken place.

Had Tarleton been allowed time to recollect himself, it is probable he would have objected to the absence of seconds; but, goaded on by the taunts of Glen Eynort, who, in his infuriate moods, recked neither his own life nor the life of his enemy, he unpremeditatedly took his stand on the retired spot to which the other guided him, and, picked down by an unerring bullet, paid the forfeit of his temerity with his blood.

His antagonist merely waited to see him fall, and then fled, scared by the shouts of several people who had seen the  
the

the blaze of the pistols, and suspected the occasion on which they were fired. To these persons Tarleton was obliged for that assistance which, there is reason to believe, his opponent would not have exerted himself to procure.

Clifford had been but a short time by the side of the wounded man, when Lochullin appeared, for the purpose of convincing himself that there were hopes, and to express his unqualified detestation of Glen Eynort's intemperate behaviour. Had he not left his sister in the utmost agony of mind, and half the ladies in the ball-room administering salts and aromatic vinegar to aunt Marjory, who had sentimentally gone off in a faint, he would have protracted his stay; but the excuse was too good to require any thing in addition, and Clifford hurried him away.

Keeping a lonely vigil by the bed of suffering is, of all occupations, the most calculated to sadden the heart, and to  
bring

bring the mind into a just train of thinking. In the solitude and dismal array of a sick chamber, there is something that thoroughly breaks down even the buoyant spirit of youth ; and Clifford found a night of gloomy and desponding reflection succeed the few hours of exhilaration he had enjoyed during the evening.

He was much attached to Tarleton, and could not refrain from blaming himself for having swayed him to attend the ball, inasmuch as it seemed to render him the original, though innocent cause of his misfortune. Towards Glen Ey-nort he now entertained a feeling bordering on absolute antipathy. In his own mind he felt perfectly assured, that his attentions to Lillias had first ruffled the Highlander's temper, and that Tarleton had been singled out as a fit object for wreaking his passion on, chiefly because he was his friend ; nor could he  
console

console himself with the hope that this was the last evil turn the same hand would work him.

Lillias had, in her alarm, sketched a character at once vindictive, furious, and cruel—a character likely to harden and grow more worthless from every additional crime; and wisdom seemed to point it out as the safest and most commendable path to avoid him assiduously for the future.

But this he could not firmly resolve to do, though he had before his eyes an impressive warning in his suffering friend. He had already given a half-promise to Lochullin, that, on a certain day, only a few weeks distant, he would endeavour to repeat his visit to Dun Rimmon; and all the danger that might accrue from again coming in contact with the fiery Glen Eynort, conjoined with the deep sentiments of aversion he now felt to associate with a man of so little self-command, were insufficient to counterbalance

terbalance the promised pleasure to be derived from other society.

When the morning broke, leaving Tarleton in a quiet sleep, he endeavoured to obtain some rest himself. In this he finally succeeded; and when he awoke, Lochullin's was the first face he looked upon. He had rode into town thus early, to inform himself of how the wounded man had passed the night, and to ascertain if, on second examination, his hurt bore the same favourable aspect.

These questions answered to his satisfaction, he again spoke of the intemperance of his kinsman's conduct in the terms it deserved.—“ Save my grandfather,” said he, “ I scarcely think he will meet one individual that approves of his conduct in the whole country. By artfully representing to sir Colin that your friend insulted him, and that it did not suit his Highland spirit to brook offence from a Saxon beyond the moment in which it was given, he will secure for himself

himself encomiums rather than blame. It is not the first time that the chieftain's voice and fortune have supported him, when all the Highlands rung with complaints and condemnation; but he has little to pride himself on in such support, when every day proves how seriously my grandfather's prejudices obscure the innate justice of his disposition, and, as it were, make him view actions therewith connected through the most deceptious medium. Glen Eynort will, I doubt not, be ready to receive me when I return to Dun Rimmon, but my hand and voice shall not greet him whom my heart condemns; nor will Lillias hail him as the conqueror he may fancy himself. By this last act he has forfeited her esteem for ever; and sir Colin's dearest hope, of seeing her future lady of Glen Rimmon, is utterly blasted."

"Glen Eynort," said Clifford, "has certainly behaved more like a ruffian than a man of magnanimous spirit, yet  
I wish

I wish not that any incident, the most remotely connected with myself, should be the means of sowing disunion in your family. I found it happy, and each member attached to the other. I shall soon, very soon depart, in all likelihood never to return; let me go, therefore, with the sense that I have not been the means of loosening one family-tie. You will say that I have nothing to do in the matter—that it is Tarleton's cause you espouse; but I know your generous heart too well to admit this. Tarleton is my friend, and on that account you are doubly enraged against the man that injured him. Had it been my dog that was maltreated, you would have stood up in his defence."

"Since you give me credit for such stability of friendship," said Lochullin, a flush of pleasure settling on his countenance, "I shall not give way to a sense of my own demerits, and degrade the imaginary qualities you endow me with  
to

to their true standard: for I know no happiness more exquisite than that derived from the conviction that I am not thought ungrateful or cold-hearted; nay, I will even threaten Glen Eynort no more with my appalling frown, provided you agree to the proviso I am about to make."

"Name it," said Clifford; "and if it is not most decidedly at variance with my principles, your kinsman shall see no wrinkle on your brow."

"Then it is that you adhere to your engagement of last night," returned Lochullin. "While both of us apprehended nothing of this rencontre, you almost fixed a day for setting off on a second pilgrimage to our solitary glen. Let it not alter your intention; but save Glen Eynort from the charge of having, in addition to his other evil works, banished from our hearth a friend we so much love and value as Charles Clifford."

"Your

“ Your generous attentions ill merit a denial,” said Clifford, who could not resist the yearnings of his heart; “ I therefore acquiesce, and, unless Tarleton’s situation is precarious, shall take another look at Glen Rimmon, before a soldier’s destiny renders the wish unavailing.”

“ And if, amongst others, Glen Eynort is there to meet you, shall the past be forgotten ?” inquired the youth. “ You have advised me to receive his hand in friendship—will you press it with the same forgiving clasp ?”

“ Glen Eynort,” answered Clifford, “ is related to you by ties of blood, and it therefore becomes you to be on terms of amity with each other. Between him and me there exists no such bond, unless it be in that stream which his madness shed, and which rises up to sever, not unite us. I will never act so hypocritically as to profess friendship where I cannot feel it; but if I make no display of esteem, neither will I irritate him, or pain you, by  
any

any intended provocation. Provided we can meet in public, and associate for a few days together, without coming to open disagreement, or destroying the happiness of others by our sour looks, I shall be the individual who derives the most pleasure from the circumstance, inasmuch as it will allow me to enjoy, for the last time I fear, society, for the loss of which I shall not soon find an equivalent. But should the ill-regulated passions of either burst forth—should he take offence at my cold civility, or I fancy I descry aught disrespectful in his bearing, then I will bid farewell to Dun Rimmon; and however we may settle differences afterwards, by flight, avoid staining its halls with the shame invariably attendant on brawling and altercation.”

“ Did your disposition bear the least similitude to that of Glen Eynort,” said Lochullin, “ I should scarcely agree to your coming together on these terms;

but as nature has formed you mild and forgiving, and as the recent vent given to his fiery spirit will doubtless be followed by a long interval of quiescence, the chance of danger resulting seems too insignificant to be paid attention to. This duel has so disgusted my sister with Inverness, that she is determined to return to Dun Rimmon with as little delay as possible; nor can all the entreaties of aunt Marjory, who is fond of general society, prevail on her to alter her mind. I am under the necessity of being their escort, and unless you can resolve on leaving Mr. Tarleton for a few hours to-morrow forenoon, and riding out as far as our present abode, must now bid you adieu. If you can quit your friend's bedside for so short a space of time, I need not say that your visit will be received with pleasure by the hospitable family with whom we reside. Aunt Marjory too will be gratified, and the uneasiness Lillias suffers regarding

Mr.

Mr. Tarleton experience great diminution, when she hears from your own lips that he is in a fair way of recovery."

"I will give no promise," said Clifford, notwithstanding inclination prompted him to decide at once. "If Tarleton is no worse, I shall not hesitate to give way to my wishes, and personally pay my respects, before the ladies depart. Should it prove otherwise, to you I delegate that duty, well assured you will not fail to shield me from a charge of neglect."

"But one thing more have I to mention," observed Lochullin, after stating that the apology would be more than sufficient, without his adducing a word in support. "You have already proved the superiority of our Highland ponies in scrambling over such rugged tracts as lie between this and Glen Rimmon, and the impracticability of a stranger traversing it without a guide. On the day we have fixed upon, old Donald Dar-

roch, and the steed you were formerly pleased to commend, shall be in waiting at this same hotel; and so mounted and piloted, I can insure your safe arrival at the castle within the hour in which we expect you."

Clifford objected to this arrangement, on the score of the trouble it must necessarily entail on more than one individual; but Lochullin would not listen to such reasoning, or on any account consent to the propositions that followed, of engaging a guide and horses for himself. This matter settled, the young Highlander, after bidding Tarleton adieu, mounted his pony and rode away.

Clifford would have taken shame to himself, had he felt conscious in his heart that his anxiety regarding the health of his friend was at all increased by the foregoing conversation; yet it is questionable if the greater half of mankind, under similar circumstances, would not internally have confessed it so. Selfishness

ishness is so subtle, and steals so imperceptibly into the human heart, that that man can hardly be supposed to exist, whose actions are not more or less tinted from this impure source. Clifford was attached to Tarleton by the ties of esteem and long association; he would readily have risked his life in his defence, and he experienced a sad and solitary satisfaction in giving the attendance his situation required; yet, even by the sick man's bed, he meditated on the beauty and gentleness of Lillias Macara, and, mingling with his low moans, almost fancied he heard her soft voice murmuring that she was to depart on the morrow.

The morrow came, and as if Cupid had been on the watch, and smoothed his pillow throughout the night, in order to favour the interview, Tarleton awoke considerably better. The moment Clifford intimated his wish to bid his friends adieu, he strenuously insisted

on his so doing, and was so successfully supported by the surgeon in a declaration of his rapid amendment, that the other set off to pay his visit, without the least compunction at leaving him. A short and hasty ride brought him to the mansion he was in search of, and by Lochullin he was introduced to the family, who received him with all the warmth he could desire. Nor did Miss Marjory Macrimmon withhold her share of flattering attention; her inquiries after his friend were numerous, her quotations tender, and, without being guilty of inordinate vanity, frequently admitting of personal application. As to Lillias, she was niggard of her words; but the visitor saw more to love and rejoice at in the kind expression of her dove-like eyes, than in all the exertions made by the others to prove their sincerity.

It was not till he was again on the wing, and preparing to depart, in defiance of every entreaty used to detain him

him to dinner, that he did more than exchange a few words with her. Lochullin proposed that his sister and aunt should walk with him as far as the boundary of the plantations that surrounded the house; and during this saunter, Clifford found himself and Lillias a few paces in rear of the other two. In order to break the silence that ensued, he mentioned the hope he cherished of seeing Dun Rimmon once more, before he finally exchanged the quiet of Fort George for the bustle of a camp.—“ I have been the more strongly influenced to accept Lochullin’s invitation,” added he, “ from the certainty that many years must necessarily pass without such an opportunity again occurring; I might even assert, that, in all probability, I shall never more look upon those snowy heights, when once distance has shut them out from my sight; but at this moment my soul

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shrinks

shrinks from admitting a thought so gloomy."

"And never give it admission," said Lillias, earnestly. "Remember that the circumstances of your introduction to our family have, from the first, elevated you in our estimation far above the rank of a common acquaintance. War will have an end; and however fortune may have dealt with us in the interim, your reappearance among our hills will prove a period of rejoicing. Yet I must be plain with you, and confess that somehow I tremble at the idea of your being our guest at the present juncture; and were it not that Lochullin has in part shewn me the absurdity of my fears, I know not but I might entreat you to delay your visit."

"I understand you, Miss Macara," said Clifford, reddening from the supposition that her anxiety concerned Glen Eynort alone; "but give yourself no  
uneasiness

uneasiness on that head. I shall not disgrace the abode of sir Colin Macrimmon by quarrelling with his kinsman, however slightly I may respect the latter. I had pledged myself thus far before, and need scarcely add, that your solicitude regarding Glen Eynort is, with me, the strongest advocate in favour of peace."

"It is not for him I tremble," exclaimed Lillias, in the utmost perplexity how to express herself. "I know Glen Eynort too well to fear he will be the sufferer, or to feel solicitous regarding his safety. But should he burst forth in one of those desolating gusts of rage which at times overtake him, or, what is nearly as bad, should he come to view some innocent man with that silent and deadly malice which it is his pride to cherish, and his joy to gratify, who then shall insure the safety of others? Alas! alas! sorrow will soon be in all our hearts!"

“And yet, if I mistake not,” said Clifford, “sorrow is the last feeling her kinsman desires to occasion Miss Macara.”

“It may be so,” returned Lillias; “but, like many other people, he adopts an improper way to ward it off. I feel that I am acting a part far from becoming in thus exposing the failings of a relative, but the recent misfortune he has occasioned renders it almost incumbent on me so to do, in order to save another from a similar outrage. Glen Eynort is a man I never can look upon without dread, and never do I see his fiery glance rivet itself on the face of a shrinking peasant who has unwittingly offended him, but I mourn for the clan that must soon receive him as its chief. Happy, happy would it be for the Clan Rimmon, if Lochullin were destined to become its future head, instead of Ninian of Glen Eynort!”

“Sincerely do I coincide in that opinion,”

nion," observed Clifford. "Your brother is the most benevolent and humane of human beings: in him the harsh and cruel nature of man is softened down to a standard, of which he stands, as it were, a solitary specimen—at least to me he is as yet such."

"It is kind of you to commend Æneas," returned Lillias, with evident signs of satisfaction; "for, though happy in my other kindred, he alone seems to possess the true art of securing affection. But we were speaking of the day that will see Glen Eynort sir Ninian Macrimmon, and prognosticating sorrow to the clan when that event takes place. In this we are not singular, for every peasant on my grandfather's estates deprecates his death as the harbinger of certain calamity. Had my uncle Norman survived, how very, very different would have been the general anticipation! but death cut him off in his prime, and gave him for a successor one with-

out a single quality to console his people for their loss. For a time hopes were entertained that Glen Eynort's prospects would be blighted by the restoration of a less remote and more beloved branch to the parent stem, from which it had been rudely severed; but it proved futile in the end—indeed I have reason to believe sir Colin desired that it should do so throughout. From what I have heard of the unfortunate Ranald Macrimmon, I am fully convinced many have cause to bewail his untimely death.”

“ And who was this Ranald Macrimmon?” inquired Clifford, interested in his fate, chiefly because he had stood between Glen Eynort and a title.

“ The orphan son of Roderick, sir Colin's only brother,” replied Lillias. “ Along with uncle Norman, my mother, and aunt Marjory, he was reared and educated at Dun Rimmon, and more beloved than either. Sir Colin  
destined

destined for him the portion of a younger son, in order to supply the want of paternal inheritance; and it was publicly understood, that as soon as the parties were of age, aunt Marjory was to become his wife. But this arrangement had been made without consulting the young man's inclinations, and when it came to be proposed to him, he evinced the most determined opposition, not having, as he averred, the smallest desire to marry his cousin. In the end he fled the castle, and some connexion he subsequently formed exiled him from it for ever. That he has been dead many years few doubt, but none can tell where he laid his bones. Some of the aged peasants in Glen Rimmon take delight in speaking of him, and predict that he will return; but the credulity incident to their years alone gives rise to this supposition. I may also add, that Lochullin has assured me that Glen Eynort is not without his doubts on this

this head, and that he has done every thing to obtain substantial evidence of Ranald's death, but without success—no clew remaining by which he can be traced.”

“I am not at all surprised that Glen Eynort should feel restless until his rights are established beyond all possibility of being invalidated,” said Clifford. “To a man of his disposition, uncertainty must give intolerable pain.”

“I do not believe any fancies of his own would have created a feeling of insecurity,” observed Lillias; “but, like all Highlanders, his mind is tinctured with superstition, and to that he owes his dread of the resurrection of poor wandering Ranald. Amongst our solitary glens there prevails a disease of the mind called the second sight—a sort of horrible dreaming, in which the wretched victim imagines futurity revealed to his fear-struck eyes. All I can say of the matter is, that I am firmly convinced the  
unhappy

unhappy beings on whom it is said to have fallen are not systematically and knowingly impostors, but terrifically assured, in their own minds, that no phantasy of the imagination deludes them; for never is misery more affectingly and strikingly portrayed in the human countenance than in that of a Highland seer. Such an unfortunate is Riach MacRyri, the foster-father of Glen Eynort. When a youth, he was greatly noticed by the family at Dun Rimmon, and, through the kindness of the chief, received an education that qualified him for the situation of a parish school-master, which office he filled for a considerable time with credit to himself. Unhappily the death of his wife, added perhaps to an hereditary taint, unsettled his mind, and he became a victim to the awful malady of the gifted eye. To the existence of this, Glen Eynort is said to give implicit credence; and his consultations with Mac Ryri, which

which are known to be frequent and long, corroborate the assertion. Something that has escaped the seer, in one of those interviews, is supposed to have impressed on the other's mind a conviction that Ranald Macrimmon is still alive; at least I can assign no better cause for the avidity with which he starts on every new scent that offers, and the pertinacity with which he pursues it to the last."

"I am somewhat astonished," said Clifford, "that I should not have heard of this wizard Mac Ryri while at Dun Rimmon. The proximity of such a person, I should think likely to be a circumstance of the greatest notoriety."

"He is known to every Highlander north of the Glen More," returned Lillias; "but where shall we find the peasant that dares talk lightly of the second sight? If the name of MacRyri is ever mentioned, it is when the family-circle closes in of an evening round the  
bog-

bog-wood fire, and resorts to preternatural tales to beguile those dismal hours when winter and darkness are without the cottage. Even then it is uttered in a whisper, and followed by an invocation, that the God of mercy will preserve them and theirs from such a grievous calamity. In the castle you had as little chance of hearing aught of the seer as in the peasant's hut; and but for the information I now tender, might have departed ignorant that a man so wretched as Riach MacRyri was in existence. Sir Colin would think himself guilty of heinous disrespect towards the ancient worthies he shapes his conduct by, were he to dispute their superstitious creed, or expose it to the ridicule of a Saxon. Glen Eynort, as you may easily infer from what I have already said, was not likely to enter on the subject with a stranger. Aunt Marjory indeed might have been betrayed into a full disclosure, had the circumstance

stance occurred to her; yet, on the whole, I suspect the scepticism she boasts of, and which she grounds on the incontrovertible authority of her dearly-beloved books, is to be found only in her arguments, not in her heart."

"What is that you say concerning books, my dear?" exclaimed Miss Macrimmon, whose acute ear had caught the talismanic word. "Upon my veracity, Mr. Clifford, I take it very unkind that you waste all your literary converse on that young chit, who has hardly done conning her catechism. Girls in their teens may look wise enough to be sure, and when you make a pause in declamation, simper out 'delightful,' or 'very fine indeed;' but believe me, if you desire to taste the 'feast of reason and the flow of soul,' you must look to females of mature age—to females who have dived into more erudite works than song-books or novels."

"You upbraid Mr. Clifford unjustly, aunt,"

aunt," interposed Lillias; "for if my recollection stands me true, nothing bearing a resemblance to literary discussion has this day escaped his lips. I only happened to hazard a remark relative to your passion for study, never imagining the breeze was to bear its conclusion to your ears."

"And I am confident, Lillias," said Miss Marjory, complacently, "none of my kindred are better qualified to hazard a remark on that subject than yourself. To you it is well known how indefatigably I have travelled through piles of musty and ponderous *tomes*—how often I have seen the sun rise and set without moving from my desk—how many long and solitary nights I have 'wasted the midnight oil.' But the world shall ultimately bear testimony to the unwearied ardour I have manifested, and my name be 'honoured by the nations', long after the powerful spirit within has, by its workings, crumbled this frail tenement  
to

to dust. Yes, Mr. Clifford, the time draws nigh, when from these mountains shall be poured forth a flood of insufferable light, such as shall make the upstart geniuses of the present day hide their diminished heads. But I must not anticipate. Suffice it to say, that time and posterity shall acknowledge, that without quitting our own snowy rocks, it is possible to quaff of the pure Castalian fount, and those ‘sons of little men,’ who now beleaguer the temple of Fame, shrink back in dismay to that muddy pool, which, from the first, they have mistaken for the true and unpolluted spring. Miserable drivellers! they know not what the sweeping pen of a feeble woman is destined to accomplish!”

“I wish it may be able to sweep us home before the shower comes on,” said Lochullin, laughing, as he cast an arch glance at the sky. “Come, Clifford, mount and be off, if you would save your  
your

your smart jacket, and let aunt Marjory reserve further disclosures till she has you laid fast for a fortnight at Dun Rimmon."

Clifford followed his advice, and carrying with him expressions of regard from each, commenced his solitary ride to Inverness.

## CHAPTER VI.



She knew she was beloved by him—she knew,  
For quickly comes such knowledge, that his heart  
Was darkened with her shadow, and she saw  
That he was wretched ; but she saw not all. BYRON.

TARLETON had been, for some time, in a state of convalescence, and restored to the society of his brother-officers, ere the day arrived on which Clifford proposed setting off for Glen Rimmon ; nothing therefore occurred to derange his plans, and on the appointed morning he once more bade a transient adieu to garrison-duty.

Donald Darroch and his four-footed friends were at their post, and sufficiently recruited by a night's rest to start without delay ; so that, two hours before noon, the spires of Inverness  
were

were behind them. For a time Clifford was so wrapped up in his own thoughts, that he made no effort to comprehend the uncouth gibberish of his attendant, farther than was indispensably requisite; but when the soft features of the districts bordering the eastern firths were exchanged for the monotonous sterility of the uplands—when, instead of the murmuring of gentle waves, and the cheerful hum of clustering hamlets, he heard the howling of the mountain-blast, and the fierce whoop of those solitary birds that haunt these uninhabited moors, he came to long for the sound of the human voice. Donald, who had learned to respect him during the former excursion, readily gave way to this humour; and a conversation ensued, unintelligible in many parts to both, it is true, yet devoid of amusement to neither. When Clifford spoke of his chief, Donald implored Heaven to prolong his life, for the glory and happiness of his clan;

clan; when Lochullin was the theme, he blessed his fair hair, and uttered an ejaculation of regret that he was not a Macrimmon; and for Lillias he had so many Gaelic terms of endearment, that his companion began to suspect he had made his last essay at speaking English; but when Glen Eynort was casually mentioned, the old Highlander hung his head, and remained mute. Clifford noticed the sudden change, and inquired the reason.

“Pecause she no pe fond of speaking of Glen Eynort,” was Donald’s reply.

“And why not, Donald?” asked the other. “He will be your chief in the course of time, and affection, I believe, is a clansman’s duty.”

“And ta chieftain’s duty too,” exclaimed Donald. “If ta one fails to pe friend, ta other will fail to opey; if ta chief tishonours ta clansman, ta clansman will hate ta chief. In her rage Glen Eynort forgot tat ta plood of Macrimmon  
rioman

rioman was in ta veins of Tonald Tarroch as well as her ain, and tisgraced her gray hairs py a vile plow. For tat plow she has her curse, for tat plow she has her son's curse, and for tat plow, when she'll pe porn, she'll have her son's son's curse."

"That is cursing him with a vengeance," said Clifford, looking with amazement on the keen flashing eyes of the old man. "Considering his ungovernable temper, and the probability that he struck you in a moment when passion had completely mastered his reason, I think you punish the offence more severely than it deserves."

"Py ta God tat made her," returned Donald, "she would have had her heart's plood, had she no peen ta last Macrioman! Had ta goot and ta gentle Ranald Bane peen petween her and ta chieftain, ta worms had eaten Glen Ey-nort lang ago, though ta teugh neck o' Tonald Tarroch had paid ta forfeit."

“ This Ranald Bane you mention, and the son of your chieftain’s brother, were they one and the same person ? ” inquired Clifford, absently.

“ Ta were,” answered Donald. “ Ranald Bane, or ta fair Ranald Macrioman, was ta son of ta Red Roderick, and ta chief tat clan Crioman desired, failing Norman More. Ta plood of Ranald Bane was ta pest and ta purest in ta country of ta Gael, for even py ta mother’s side she was of a great race, and sprung from ta high chiefs of Kintail. Put Glen Eynort has ta pad plood of a pase-porn set in his heart, and ta goot stream of Macrioman runs peside it no more.”

“ By all accounts,” said Clifford, “ it is a great misfortune to the clan, that this Ranald Bane is not forthcoming to assume the chieftainship when sir Colin dies.”

“ To pe sure, to pe sure ! ” exclaimed Donald, emphatically. “ Ta pairn in  
ta

ta cradle will pe kenning tat, lang after ta bones of Tonalld Dhu are peneath ta sod. Put if ta seer speaks true, and hersell's no ta man to tout her, ta clan Crioman may pe keeping up ta heart yet. Ta seas are proad, put ta Gael has peen crossing tem pefore; and Ranald Bane may pe finding ta way hame, when ta pase heart of Glen Eynort pe least expecting her."

Clifford would gladly have acquired some additional information respecting the prophecies of the seer, but the moment he uttered the name of MacRyri, a spell seemed cast on Donald's speech. From being unusually garrulous and communicative, he suddenly became taciturn and reserved, and occasionally surveyed the distant parts of the moors over which they were travelling, with the wandering uneasy glance of one who expected his eyes were to be blasted with some hideous spectacle. Such questions as he did reply to were either

answered by evasive sentences, or so much Gaelic intentionally interlarded, that he might as well have been silent altogether; and as this unsocial mood continued until they reached Ardgy, Clifford's curiosity remained ungratified.

Murdoch Bain received him with all the contortions of face, and variety of gesture, that had distinguished him on former occasions, and was so evidently inclined to make himself and his house agreeable, that had his guest shewn the least desire to lay himself under so much obligation, there is no doubt but mine host would have favoured him with his company throughout the evening. As no hint to this effect was given, however, Murdoch was partly consoled by the assurance that the stranger, if he knew all, suffered the greatest loss of the two, inasmuch as he foolishly denied himself several hours of his delectable conversation, by moping alone over his jug of punch; and  
this

this opinion he did not neglect to intimate to Donald, in the course of a long confabulation that took place betwixt them, as they sat by the kitchen-fire, momentarily exchanging mulls, and gulping down copious libations of pure *usquebaugh*.

On the ensuing morning, Clifford hardly took time to swallow his breakfast before he recommenced his journey, so eager was he to press on, and meet the welcome he anticipated. Donald's talkative humour had returned, but the rapidity of their progress precluded his taking advantage of it, notwithstanding he still felt somewhat inquisitive regarding the Highland prophet. Had he been aware, that, in a huge pile of rocks, lifting their gray heads, in solitary isolation, in the centre of a wide heath they necessarily crossed previous to entering Glen Rimmon, he beheld one of Mac Ryri's favourite and most dreaded haunts, it is possible he might have felt

inclined to slacken his pace, and turn aside to visit it. As it was, he only remarked that Donald seemed to eye the mass with suspicion; that he persisted in keeping his horse abreast of him, and on the farther side of the way, all the while it was in sight; and that when interrogated as to its name, he, with a trembling voice, designated it the “Giant’s Cairn.”

Lochullin met them in the small cultivated valley leading into Glen Rimmon, and Clifford learned, with undisguised satisfaction, that Glen Eynort had been for some time absent from the castle, and was not expected to return for at least another week.—“But in his stead,” added Lochullin, “we have got a sprightly nymph from the shores of Loch Ruart, Miss Morag Catanach, with whom no Highland lady between Loch Assint and Kintail, Ben Wivis and the Culinn Hills, in Skye, dare risk comparison. I may likewise mention,  
that

that her brother Hugh is also our guest, and a most serviceable fellow, as you will find, either as a partner in a reel, a musician, vocal or instrumental, or a leaning-post for the ladies. With such a *rara avis* as Morag, to delight our eyes, and such a good-humoured, frank, accommodating lad as Hugh, to dance, sing, play, and flirt with aunt Marjory, who fears the longest and most inclement evening it pleases Heaven to send us for the next fortnight?"

Clifford laughed, and assured him that ennui would seek in vain for victims at Dun Rimmon, while his own smiling face and cheerful heart remained as antidotes for those in danger. As to himself, though delicacy to a kinsman's feelings forbade the declaration, he found sufficient surety of enjoyment in the absence of Glen Eynort. Had the latter been of the party waiting to give him welcome, he felt conscious that disappointment must have followed; for every

I 4

day

day seemed destined to bring to his knowledge some additional trait of character tending to increase aversion. Stirred up by the remembrance of his brutal conduct to Tarleton, and kept continually fermenting by the idea that he aspired to, and would most likely win the hand of Lillias Macara, his antipathy threatened to burst forth the moment they came in contact; and aware that self-command might desert him, notwithstanding every prior resolution, he felt thankful at not being thrown in the way of temptation.

His reception at the castle was, as on his former visit, warm and hospitable; yet he could not overcome the idea that sir Colin was less affable and more ostentatious. He gave him the greeting of a guest, it is true, but with something forced and studied in his manner—something that seemed to say there were coldness and suspicion at his heart, whatever might be on his tongue; and this no-

tion,

tion, once admitted, Clifford found impossible to displace. Without hesitation, he ascribed it to the malice of Glen Eynort; but as the chieftain struggled to conceal his change of sentiment, and no other member of the family betrayed symptoms of infection, he came to the resolution of not letting what might, after all, be but an idle conjecture, destroy the pleasure of his visit. The blue eyes of Lillias were smiling on him—friendship was in every sentence that fell from her brother's lips; where then was there cause to reckon the stately stride and sidelong glance, piercing though it was, of an irascible old man?

In Miss Morag Catanach, though he could not discover the superlative beauty Lochullin had ascribed her, he found an amiable, light-hearted, romping girl, who had seen nothing more of the world than what lay between her father's house and Glen Rimmon. Her brother Hugh had been more faithfully delineated, for

he was on his feet the moment a dance was mentioned, tortured catgut most delectably, or squalled like a ballad-singer whenever he was requested so to do—nay, by the way of compliment to the good society he was thrown amongst, did not grudge a volunteer on extraordinary occasions, of which Clifford had proof positive, when, during the evening, he burst into a Gaelic war-whoop, which was soon understood to be a song in honour of the stranger's arrival. As to being the *cecisbeo* of Miss Marjory, that seemed much less to his taste than any other employment imposed on him; and to do that studious lady justice, she displayed no anxiety for his attentions, farther than regarded his own personal benefit. Hugh was destined for exportation to the East Indies in the course of a few months; and Miss Marjory therefore exerted all the ingenuity she was mistress of, to store his mind with necessary information concerning the  
country

country he was going to, and to stir up and quicken any taste he might chance to have for oriental literature. Unfortunately Hugh proved a most incorrigible dunce, and so disconcerted the lady, by his egregious misconceptions of some part of the Hindoo mythology, that, in despair, she gave up the task of enlightening him, which revolution took place on the very evening Clifford was added to the party.

It was not till they had assembled round the supper-table, that Glen Eynort's absence was alluded to, for the chieftain was perhaps the only individual who had him in remembrance.—“We miss Ninian much,” said he, as he slowly stirred the steaming bowl before him; “therefore our first toast shall be to his welfare. May every chief who fills this chair inherit the spirit and pride of Glen Eynort!”

Hugh Catanach repeated the toast, and emptied his glass; but Clifford and

Lochullin carried theirs to their lips in silence. Sir Colin observed that they did so, and his brow fell as he said—“Æneas, it is not thus you are accustomed to quaff off a bumper to a friend’s honour.”

“I would do much for the honour of my kindred,” answered Lochullin, “and, in proof, forbear to pledge the sentiment you have now given. When Glen Eynort’s spirit aims at a nobler end than fastening a quarrel on an inoffensive stranger—when he takes pride in some pursuit less perilous to the dignity of an ancient name than duelling, then, and not till then, will I toast him as a fit prototype for every future chief of Macrimmon.”

“I see not where he swerved from the principles it becomes him to cherish,” said sir Colin, somewhat swayed by the foregoing declaration. “If the Sassenach dared to violate an acknowledged right, Ninian was bound to beard him;  
and

and if they met each other fair and openly in the field, wherefore could the rencontre be attended with dishonour, or what further satisfaction could the Southron desire? I tell you, Æneas Macara, that the times are not yet beyond the memory of man, when such an insult, given to a person of Glen Ey-nort's lineage, had deluged the room in which it happened with blood. There was then no milder mode of putting an edge on the memory of a blundering lady, than dirking, before her eyes, the male conspirator against a Highlander's dignity."

"Thank God we live in a more humane and civilized age!" exclaimed Lochullin, carried away by the warmth of his nature; "for rash and reprehensible as my kinsman's conduct appears, such a savage mode of proceeding as you mention far exceeds it in enormity. Yet, on the whole, I suspect we have reason to rejoice that his less-fortunate  
antagonist

antagonist outlived the wound he received, or the stern hand of justice might have eventually torn up our family-honours by the roots."

"I adopt your side of the argument, Lochullin," interposed aunt Marjory, who had been on the watch for an opportunity to chime in. "Glen Eynort most unquestionably did peril the honour of our house, by going out under the covert of night, and fighting without witnesses. No later than this forenoon, I met with a very luminous and concise treatise on duelling, recently translated from the French, in which it is clearly made to appear——But stay; I will find it in five minutes, and give you the paragraph I allude to *verbatim*."

"Not to-night, Marjory, not to-night," said sir Colin, convinced, though unwilling to confess it, that his opponents were in the right. "It is my sorrow to be the first chief of Macrimmon who  
has

has not the sole administration of justice over his own possessions, and who cannot, with impunity, laugh at the distant bay of the licenced bloodhounds whose kennel is beneath the gibbet. The last sixty years have done more to break down and subdue the spirit of the Gael than the efforts of centuries can contribute to its revival; so it were better that I were with those who lived not to see their national honours tarnished, or the chieftain seated a vassal by his own hearth. I might forebode that darker years are yet in reserve for my country and my people—I might prognosticate that the children of the Gael will be strangers in the land of their fathers, and, like the homeless Jews, scattered over the face of the earth; but my heart feels the sentence of condemnation too keenly to give me resolution to utter it.”

“ And who is so blind as not to perceive, that not only our own country,  
but

but the whole nations of the earth, are tottering on the verge of ruin!" exclaimed Miss Marjory, worked up, by her father's harangue, into a similar spirit of prophecy. "Where are the heroes, the poets, the philosophers, of the olden time? Gone, gone for ever! The learned and the mighty are in their graves, and puny, despicable tribes have succeeded, who are nevertheless as giants in every thing that is good and great to the generations that shall in turn drive them off the stage. Who that takes these matters into serious consideration is not ready to exclaim, with the Fourth Harry?

————— "Therefore my grief  
Stretches itself beyond the hour of death;  
The blood weeps from my heart when I do shape,  
In forms imaginary, the unguided days  
And rotten times that you shall look upon,  
When I am sleeping with my ancestors."

This unlooked-for explosion from Miss Marjory completely banished all recollection

lection of the foregoing dispute, and the general attention was directed to tranquillizing the inspired lady, who threatened to turn tiresome, provided she was not called to order in time. Sir Colin's choler smoothed down into gravity bordering on sadness; and during the remainder of the evening he endeavoured, by the most marked attention, to dissipate any annoyance he might have given his guest. In this he finally succeeded; and when they parted for the night, it was upon the most amicable terms.

It was not the season for field-sports or genial weather; yet, for the first five days of his stay, Clifford was continually bewailing, when alone, the rapid flight of time. Deluges of rain, and boisterous winds, such as generally herald a Highland spring, rendered him, in common with the others, a willing prisoner; and except a few hours spent in unsuccessful angling, in the turbid stream that swept  
round

round the base of the Dun, and a Sunday forenoon devoted to attending the parish kirk, which stood in a distant glen, he quitted not the magic circle within the castle.

Anxious to carry away with him some lasting memento of his residence in the Highlands, he had expressed, in his former visit, a wish to acquire as much of the Gaelic language as possible; and though holding out but faint hopes of his becoming a proficient in that difficult tongue, all were eager to yield him assistance. Happily Miss Marjory was too deeply engaged with her private studies to demand, as her right, the task of instructing him; Lochullin professed himself *unequal* to it; he was therefore, as he had all along desired, given over to the tuition of Lillias. That he improved rapidly cannot be averred, yet no pupil ever evinced more docility, or less impatience at the duration of his lessons. Every word that

that fell from the lips of his fair preceptress was indelibly inscribed on the tablet of memory ; every look and gesture were treasured up in remembrance, as a store from which he was to extract consolation and happiness, when he again resumed his wanderings, and returned to buffet alone the troublous billows of life.

It cannot be said that even a tacit understanding subsisted between them, as to the mutual attachment gradually twining round their hearts. Lillias was so careful to conceal every symptom likely to disclose that her bosom had unwarily admitted an insidious guest, so watchful over the sentiments she uttered, and the glances her eyes sent forth, that Clifford, had he dared to seek for hope in either, must have turned away in despair. But hope, as far as regarded her, found no resting-place in his breast. He had sufficient judgment to perceive the manifest absurdity of indulging the  
belief,

belief, that any revolution within the range of probability could enable him to surmount the obstacles that conspired to keep them separate; and though this conviction did not extinguish the flame, it greatly contributed to prevent its bursting out ungovernably. All he desired was, for a few short days, to gaze on and listen to one, such as he never more expected to hear or see in his earthly pilgrimage.—“ In my lonely moods,” said he, while mentally canvassing the matter, “ she will rise up, like a bright dream, to make me think better of my species. When this visit comes to an end, we part to meet not again in life; and as the poison is diffused through my veins alone, let me not deny myself the melancholy pleasure of imbibing it. It will be soon enough to search for an antidote when I have nothing else to attend to.”

It was unanimously agreed, that when two or three successive days of good weather

weather held out a prospect of the excursion being made with comfort, the whole of the young people should escort Hugh Catanach and his sister across the mountains, as far as Craig Aral, their father's place of abode, and, for one night at least, partake of his hospitality. In consequence of this arrangement, the first blink of sunshine was hailed with delight by the majority, who were eager to emerge from their confinement; and as a prelude to the projected ride, it was proposed, in the whim of the moment, to visit the cataract in the vicinity of the Dun, called *Eass na Smudh*, or the Fall of Smoke. Clifford had seen it in the preceding autumn, when a long season of drought had dried up the stream to a mere ribbon; but the late heavy falls of rain, and melting of the snows in the uplands, warranted the expectation of its now presenting a different appearance, and he readily acceded to the proposition. Aunt Marjory, for a wonder,

wonder, chose to remain at home; so that Lillias, her sister, Morag Catanach, and the three young men, composed the party.

Guided by Lochullin, who, as usual, was buoyant in spirit, they plunged into the deep woods behind the castle; and crossing a gloomy hollow, which parted the Dun from the adjacent mountain, and which their leader termed the *Mile of Darkness*, gained the thickly-wooded brow of the opposite steep. Along this ran a narrow path, by following which they gradually wound round the craggy shoulder of the hill, and came to overlook the vast rent in the stony ridge by which the river entered Glen Rimon. Still the cataract was unseen, though a light fleecy vapour, floating in the gorge of the dell, and a sound like to the "voice of many waters," announced its proximity, and prepared the mind for some grand and impressive spectacle. For a time they were again  
buried

buried in coppice-wood, and kept climbing the side of a rugged eminence; but amply was their labour repaid, when, attaining a small terrace, and looking over a low artificial breastwork of turf, one glance sufficed to take in the concentrated sublimity of the fall, the dingy whirlpool that received the raging torrent, and the shattered weather-worn rocks hemming it in.

Clifford recoiled with horror when he found he had unwittingly stretched his neck over the very abyss, and that a trivial start would inevitably precipitate him into the unfathomable bowl, which looked the more profound and intimidating, from the greater part retaining an inky hue and unbroken placidity, although encompassed by foam and uproar. He was given to understand by his companions, that, from the awful height on which he knelt, a wretched man had, some years before, cast himself in a fit of despair and jealousy.

Fancy

Fancy sickened at picturing the terrors of a leap, which, in a descent of upwards of four hundred feet, there was neither crag nor bush to interrupt. Once over the cliff, and the suicide rested not till hidden for ever in the gloomy caldron which had swallowed up the torrents of ages.

As was anticipated, the melting of the snow on the hills enclosing the fountains of the river had greatly increased the body of water; and its brown mossy tinge contributed to display, by contrast, the dazzling whiteness of the falling sheet that shot headlong down the rock. Not satisfied with the view from above, it was determined to descend the steep bank, by a path which the ladies had often before proved practicable, and witness its grandeur from below. Clifford would have opposed this motion, under the plea that no female could summon courage sufficient to attempt a feat, by failing in  
which

which she insured to herself a horrid death; but all held his fears in utter scorn, and while he was yet speaking, Morag and Unn set up a shout of exultation, to intimate they had already weathered the most perilous point. Lillias was bent on following their example; so he had nothing for it but to give up the contest, and watch her progress the best way he could. In a short time however she proved herself quite equal to the undertaking; for, clinging by the uncovered roots of the trees that vegetated in the rifts of the crag, she quickly reached a secure station in the bosom of the ravine, while, instead of being able to tender assistance, he found it required all his exertion to pursue her footsteps.

Lochullin and his venturous companions, satisfied with a momentary view of the fall, had paused but a few minutes after attaining its level; and then bent on making new discoveries, pushed heedlessly down the dell, leap-

ing from rock to rock, in the channel of the whirling stream, with startling temerity. In the end, not only their forms, but their voices, were lost among the massy blocks, round which the struggling water fought its way ; and Clifford saw himself left alone with Lillias, in the very bosom of a scene such as nature rarely discloses. They stood on a small verdant projection, in the similitude of a half-demolished arch, which impended over the narrow bed of the river, at the elevation of a few feet. The snowy unbroken column fell so near, that its steam-like spray alighted on their clothes in a heavy dew ; the solemn and profound whirlpool that received it wheeled, and bubbled, and moaned, within a few yards ; and from the environing woods and cliffs, and the thousand caverns in which the pent-up torrent toiled, rose that deep and mysterious roar, which seems to tell the wondering and awe-struck soul that it  
hears

hears the voice of *Him* who shall, in the end, cause "heaven and earth to pass away."

Familiarity had not destroyed in Lillias a taste for sublimity such as the Fall of Smoke thus presented, and for a time she remained nearly as much entranced as her companion. Their rambling friends were forgotten—the whole world seemed shut out from the magnificent hermitage to which they had retired; and too interestingly occupied to desire a change of position, they, in silence, yet simultaneously, seated themselves on the short grassy carpet that covered the jutting crag on which they were stationed. Sadness came gradually to displace admiration in the heart of Clifford, and he could not resist the temptation of saying—"When Miss Macara next visits this glorious scene, her English friend will be far—far away."

"I fear as much," replied Lillias, in a  
K 2 tone

tone of regret; "but though gone, he shall not be forgotten."

"And yet time and separation are mortal foes to memory," said Clifford, unwilling to drop the subject, yet trembling at the promptings of his heart.

"In your country they may be so," was her rejoinder; "but among our mountains the past and the departed furnish our chief happiness. You can bear witness how many trivial circumstances of old occurrence—how many names that are now the only relics on earth of those who bore them, are recalled to mind over our evening-fire, and commented on with a far deeper interest than the present ever seems to obtain. When you are gone many a long year, yours will hold a similar place in our remembrance. When our heads are gray, and Dun Rimmon Castle no longer our habitation, by the hearth of Lochullin shall be uttered, with a blessing, the name of his preserver;

server; and when I, in turn, am called upon for some anecdote of the valued stranger, it shall be to say, that *Eass na Smudh* remains as a witness to my promise that he should never be forgotten."

"And shall it remain as a witness to no warmer promise than that of mere remembrance?" inquired Clifford, totally losing his self-command. "Will not Miss Macara allow the stranger to resume his wanderings, with the conviction that she knew he loved her, and that she not only knew, but forgave?"

The glance of Lillias wandered restlessly among the gigantic fragments that blocked up the passage to her friends, and then earnestly measured the bank she had to climb.—"This conversation must be dropped, Mr. Clifford," said she, at length, while her confusion was evident, from the involuntary manner in which she brushed the moss away from the stones beside her. "I had no

suspicion that the sentiments of friendship I expressed would have produced a declaration which must throw a painful constraint over our future intercourse—but I am a silly, miscalculating girl. Let us endeavour, by our shouts, to recall Lochullin.

“Not till I have avowed all,” exclaimed Clifford, rendered heedless by the assurance that his error was irremediable. “Let me first protest, that in publishing my folly I have no presumptuous hopes; that while I look upon and adore, I know and confess, in the deepest recesses of my heart, that there is nought in reserve but misery. Why then, in this last hour we may ever spend alone, prevent me from pouring forth those feelings I shall never more seek to divulge?”

“Because it will save both from being guilty of manifest impropriety,” answered Lillias. “Were I to remain your willing auditor for hours, vexation  
only

only must be the result, for no earthly purpose can it answer."

"It might create an interest in my favour in the only heart that has power over my future happiness," said Clifford, forgetting that but a moment before he had disclaimed all hopes.

"And if that were done?" questioned Lillias, scarcely able to restrain a smile at his inconsistency.

Clifford breathed a heavy sigh, as he answered, in a faint voice—"I have dared to sketch nothing beyond."

"So I presumed," returned she, in a steady tone; "but I have sketched much in the short time we have been seated here, and the picture teems with sorrow and disappointment, even allowing you had obtained interest in my heart to the extent you solicit. Take all I can or dare bestow—the affection of a sister. It is already yours, and shall remain so through life, provided this ruinous suit is recurred to no more.

Harsh as it may seem, I will, in order to reclaim your mind from its wanderings, repeat a sentence that often falls from my grandfather, when addressing Unn and myself on the possibility of our leaving his protection. These are his words—‘Ye know, young ones, the stocks of the land on which ye may be engrafted; if mates spring not from these, ye wither alone in Glen Rimmon.’ Such is his declaration, and need I tell one who knows him, that it is immutable? or intimate that an Englishman branches from a forbidden stem?”

“I admit all you adduce against me,” replied Clifford, sickening to the soul; “our fortunes can never be blended, and our lives must be dragged out apart; nor, if there is faith to be put in presentiment, ought I to wish it otherwise. Yet, when the dark days of existence set in, when the present becomes intolerable, and the future holds out no  
hope

hope till I pass the confines of the grave, let me have one sweet and sunny recollection to rescue from the sorrows of the past, and to cheer through the midnight that is before me. Let me have the solace of remembering, that the only being to whom my proud and solitary heart humbled itself was not insensible to the offering; and that though our paths of life were divided, yet our souls were one."

Lillias was about to answer this appeal, when the wild start her companion gave checked her utterance. To his no small consternation, he had seen one, if not two, human heads rise from the trough of the stream, within arm's length of where he sat, and instantaneously disappear the moment they arrested his eye. Transient as was the glance he obtained, it yet sufficed to assure him that neither of the rambles that had deserted them were the eavesdroppers; for such he hesitated not mentally to

designate the unknown; and bent on solving the riddle, he caught at a pendent branch, and, without answering his companion's trembling interrogation, swung himself to a stone in the bed of the agitated stream. Immediately under the projecting crag on which they had been seated, a deep and spacious cavity presented its gloomy mouth, and, like the Cerberus of the gulf, a few feet within, stood the spectre-like figure of an aged man.

The obscurity in which the stranger was shrouded admitted of no minute remarks, had Clifford's temper allowed him time to make any; but enraged at the idea of having been overheard, he sprung into the cavern, and, in a passionate tone, demanded what brought him skulking there? No answer was given to his question, but a voice, sad and thrilling, emphatically shouted—"Blood! blood! blood!" and the next instant the phantom vanished.

All

All the philosophy with which he was fortified could not prevent a sort of panic from striking to Clifford's heart, when he thus beheld, what he had the moment before deemed of earthly mould, apparently dissolve into impalpable air. In vain did he endeavour to grope his way through the mighty fragments, amongst which he suspected the figure to be hidden—in vain did he risk his limbs, and plunge fearlessly into the deep pots hollowed by the restless stream, in hopes of discovering some obscure passage. All his research was insufficient to guide him ten paces beyond the cavern's mouth; and wet and bruised, he eventually saw himself necessitated to forego the pursuit, and lend an ear to the reiterated entreaties of Lillias, who, half-frantic at his incomprehensible desertion, strongly conjured him to return. Unwilling to alarm her by describing an appearance for which he could assign no

cause, he gave an evasive answer as to the object of his wild research.

The incredulous look she vouchsafed in return declared her dissatisfaction, and the hazard he ran of being considered in the light of a lunatic ; but knowing the shock her delicacy would receive from the surmise that a third person was privy to the avowal he had ventured on, he could not resolve to give the requisite explanation.

Mutually silent and perplexed, they scrambled up the bank, and seating themselves on the terrace overhanging the cataract, awaited, with manifest impatience and constraint, the return of their friends.

In this unsocial mood they had sat for nearly half-an-hour, Clifford endeavouring, at intervals, but in vain, to start some fit subject of conversation, when shouts were heard ascending from the woods below ; and it soon became apparent

rent that the exploratory party had deserted the rugged channel of the stream, and were advancing towards them, through the brake that clothed the slope of the hill.

In a short time, and with much noise and merriment, the whole made their appearance; and, to Clifford's deep and heartfelt vexation, Glen Eynort was of the company. At no time would his reception of that personage have savoured of more than cold civility; but at such a juncture he felt instigated to deny him even that. There was a strong impression on his mind, that the most conspicuous of the two faces that had startled him was that of Glen Eynort; and what had been previously mere suspicion seemed now indisputably established as a fact. A stiff and indignant bend was therefore the only notice he felt inclined to bestow in recognition; and a smile of disdain, the answer he gave when he heard recounted the surprise experienced  
by

by the party, on seeing such an addition made to it in the most rugged part of the dell.

Glen Eynort evinced a spirit equally remote from conciliation, though at first he tried to banish the wrinkles from his brow, and play the hypocrite. The moment he came to understand the expression of the Englishman's countenance, his cheeks grew pale as ashes, and the sneer that lingered for a time on his lip rendered his aspect almost repulsive.

Clifford easily divined that these symptoms of internal commotion foreboded him no goodwill; but so violent had become his antipathy, that it might be said he sought his hatred in preference to his friendship.

Far different was the effect produced on Lillias. In that cold marbly visage, in those lurking downcast eyes, and, above all, in the tremulous curl of his thin skinny lip, she traced sufficient to make her heart falter within her breast.

Had

Had she been aware that Clifford apprehended he was in possession of his sentiments regarding her, how much more distracting must have been her alarm, and how doubly agonizing the terror with which she marked these first blossoms of rancorous enmity !

As the ladies professed themselves tired, and Glen Eynort expressed a wish to pay his respects, without delay, to the chieftain, a movement towards home succeeded their reunion. Hugh Cattanach, his sister, and Unn, were the only individuals who, during the walk, shewed signs of having enjoyed it.

Glen Eynort and Lillias sauntered side by side, in gloomy cogitation, now and then interrupted by feeble attempts at conversation, which served no other purpose than to display the thorough absence and constraint under which both laboured.

The former, when he remarked this derangement of ideas, bit his lip, and  
smiled

smiled with portentous significance; the latter trembled, looked foolish, and plunged deeper in the mire by the efforts she made to extricate herself.

As to Lochullin, he had been rendered sedate by observing the hostile expression of countenance with which his friend and kinsman had met; and, as in company with Clifford, he brought up the rear, he endeavoured to ameliorate those feelings of animosity it pained him to notice.

Clifford entreated him to drop a disagreeable subject; and when the generous-hearted mediator complied, proceeded to relate the recent alarm he had experienced, but without disclosing his suspicions that Glen Eynort had connexion with it.

Lochullin patiently heard him to the end, and then burst into an immoderate fit of laughter.—“Set your heart at rest, my good sir,” cried he, when his mirth had somewhat abated; “for be assured  
that

that you have seen neither ‘ghost or goblin damned,’ as aunt Marjory would say, but a person of mere flesh and blood like yourself, who, nevertheless, if report speaks true, defies even futurity and the grave to lock up secrets, far less a dusky cavern. To talk rationally, I must inform you that you have seen the seer Riach MacRyri, a personage of no mean repute among our mountaineers.”

“I believe you are right,” observed Clifford, thoughtfully. “Yet there is something strange in the *two* faces—the singularity of the old man’s disappearance, and in the words he made use of.”

“Why, to be sure,” returned Lochullin, with mock gravity, “I never heard it averred that MacRyri, among his other perfections, possessed the power of multiplying his own form; neither have I before met with an eyewitness to his suddenly rendering himself invisible. As to the words he horrified you with, may he not, at that identical moment,

ment, have had a glimpse of your future destiny, and, by reason of his mystical lore, seen you striding triumphant over some bloody field?"

"Ridicule will not assist in clearing up the matter to my satisfaction," said Clifford, somewhat annoyed at his companion's levity. "I shall, most assuredly, seek to satisfy myself more fully before I leave Glen Rimmon."

"By daring the terrors of the seer's abode, I presume," remarked Lochullin. "Well, if you so desire, I heed not if I bear you company, provided you defer entering on the adventure till we return from Craig Aral. But, seriously, I am of opinion that your imagination deceived you respecting the vision of *two* heads. The disappearance of the seer is a matter of no surprise, considering his intimacy with the different avenues and recesses, and the obscurity of his den. His shouting 'Blood! blood! blood!' is quite in character: no one encounters  
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MacRyri without having every sense palsied by hearing some terrific aspiration."

With this explanation, which had rationality to support it, Clifford was obliged to rest satisfied. Uninteresting topics were discussed during the remainder of the walk; and though sir Colin evinced great pleasure at the arrival of Glen Ey-nort, and every disposition to be gay, few seconded him throughout the day. So deep a shade did this ill-timed addition cast over the circle, that from being eager to postpone it, all became anxious for making the projected excursion; trusting that change of scene would restore that gaiety and good fellowship which the intrusion of one sullen visage had put to flight.

CHAPTER VII.  
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That *mild* eye had misfortune's doubtful presage ;  
It had that troubled melancholy loveliness ;  
'Twas like the fabled flower of wo, that lines  
Of sorrow in its cup of beauty bears.  
Great God ! what man could lift his hand against him ?  
MATURIN.

SIR Colin and aunt Marjory were the only individuals who chose to remain at home, in preference to joining the cavalcade bound for Loch Ruart ; the former because his years rendered him averse to travelling, except in cases of necessity ; the latter in consequence of the extreme assiduity with which she had of late devoted herself to the enlightening of mankind. More than one person would have rejoiced from the heart had some cause likewise prevented Glen Eynort from  
from

from accepting Hugh Catanach's invitation ; but in this instance fortune was unaccommodating.

It is possible Glen Eynort was aware his company would gladly have been dispensed with ; and if so, his was a spirit that could have met with no stronger incentive to persist in joining it. Had he supposed that he would be missed—that his absence would mar the pleasure of others, then he would probably have set himself down with the old chief, and proved immoveable. But to know that no better guarantee for the general amusement was desired than his seceding from the party—to know that Lillias's eyes would wax brighter, and that Clifford would exult in happiness, the moment they escaped from his keen, never-sleeping glance, were considerations sufficient to bind him to their side, had their destination been the Antipodes.

As they had a considerable distance to ride, the cavalcade marshalled at an early hour.

hour. Hugh Catanach and Morag had brought ponies of their own; and sir Colin's stud could have furnished double the number required in addition, and even mounted the troop of *gillen-ruidh*, or running footmen, that were in attendance, had it been thought necessary. The ladies and their steeds were too well acquainted with each other to prove any obstacle to the rapid progress it was the general desire to make; and, about noon, after traversing for several hours hilly and uninhabited tracts, the waters of Loch Ruart and Craig Aral became visible. The loch, which was in reality an arm of the sea, and upwards of a mile in breadth, stretched in a longitudinal form between serrated ridges of bleak desolate-looking mountains, on whose dusky sides not so much as a speck of verdure was discernible. Along the shores of the lake, however, there was a narrow strip under cultivation, and frequently intersected by deep ravines, in  
which

which flourished the birch and the hazel. On this green belt, and at more or less distance from the strand, as fancy had prompted the builder, stood the dwellings of the occupants of the soil. On the farther shore these were intermingled with several habitations of a superior cast—that is, with houses two stories high, erected of stone and mortar; but on the near side only one mansion seemed entitled to precedence, in point of aspect and construction. It was a forlorn-looking pile, elevated on a shelterless mound, about half-a-mile from the beach, and without the boundaries of the arable girdle. The moment Hugh got a view of it, he waited till Clifford came up, and then pointed it out as Craig Aral.

The latter could not repress some surprise when he beheld its comfortless and uninviting exterior. He had formed his opinion of all Highland mansions from Dun Rimmon, and could hardly bring himself to believe that the vulgar-looking

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ing discoloured mass before him was a northern laird's residence.—“ It must prove an excessively-cold situation at times,” said he, shivering, from sympathy, while he gazed.

“ Not at all,” answered Hugh, who was partial to his home. “ I never feel so warm and snug anywhere as at Craig Aral. Some people, and, among others, our friend Lochullin, aver that it would be a great improvement were my father to plant a few trees round the house ; but, in my opinion, it would spoil its appearance altogether. I am fond of seeing about me, and you may perceive I can, from our own door, overlook every *baile*\* in the strath. They may talk as they please about the grandeur of India, but I am perfectly sure I shall see nothing like Craig Aral, after I leave it. So, as God permits, it is here I shall spend my old age and die.”

“ I fear our party is stronger than you  
will

\* Hamlet or farm-town.

will be able conveniently to accommodate," said Clifford, who had been measuring with his eye the size of the edifice; "for, if I recollect aright, your own family is pretty numerous."

"If we were all collected," replied Hugh, "you might well say so; for, independent of father and mother, my uncle the major, and two sisters at home, waiting to receive us, I have two as brave brothers as ever stepped in shoe-leather, by your leave, both serving his majesty, the one in the East, the other in the West; not to speak of the gallant lad who lies buried in the sands of Egypt—white be the home of his soul! As to accommodating you all, leave that to my mother and Morag. Morag will stow the ladies past so snugly, that you will scarcely believe a female is in the house. You and Lochullin, myself and Glen Eynort, will have to double up, I suppose, as far as rooms are concerned, but all shall have separate beds."

“ But what is to become of the train that follows us ?” inquired Clifford, looking at the pedestrian troop, who, without the smallest difficulty, had kept up with them the whole way.

“ Oh !” answered Hugh, laughing, “ give yourself no uneasiness on that head. The best of them will think himself comfortably quartered, if he is turned into a barn, with a blanket to wrap round him. But I perceive you are altogether ignorant of the schemes a Highlander falls upon to accommodate his friends. Why, God bless you ! on a sacrament-day, when the great Paul of the North comes to preach in our kirk, I have seen as good as thirty shake-down beds on our floors for two nights running, and upwards of a hundred commoners sleeping in barns, lofts, and byres.”

“ I should scarcely have supposed your parish would produce respectable occupants

occupants for thirty beds," observed Clifford, highly amused.

"Nor do I assert it would give as many to our share at least," returned Hugh; "but when a noted preacher is to fill the pulpit, people come from far and near to hear him. At such times, I have known strangers come from the north coast of Sutherland to swell the congregation, and from Skye we regularly have them in boat-loads. There is not a house you can now descry but is then filled to the very door; and the more strange, the nearer the hearth."

"And where may such a multitude find provisions?" questioned the Englishman.

"Where they find beds, to be sure," replied Hugh. "People make preparations accordingly, and there is a mouthful for every one. I do not mean to deny that it weighs heavy on the entertainers, but it was the friendly custom of our fathers, and disrepute would be

attached to him who swerved from it. But I see the boat putting off—so the rogues deserve commendation for their punctuality.”

“What boat? what rogues do you allude to?” inquired Clifford, with some surprise, knowing they were not to cross the loch.

“I allude to yonder boat and the freight it carries,” was the reply, as the speaker pointed to a small skiff leaving the opposite shore, with a favouring breeze filling her light sail. “Remembering the good old adage, ‘The more the merrier,’ I yesterday dispatched a notification to three cheerful young dogs, who live over the water, to give you the meeting, and, if possible, banish the sour grin that sits on every countenance since we visited that cursed *Eass na Smudh*. Their names are Allan Breck Mac-an-Rhi, Dugald Macrae of Fasnacloich, and young Alister Chisholm; all gentlemen born, and the pick of  
of

of warm-hearted honest fellows. Allan Breck is the only one of the three on whom fortune has not bestowed her gifts with sufficient liberality, but he has the blood of kings in his veins, and that is surely more than an equivalent. Fasnacloich is of the black Macraes of Kintail, than which a worthier race treads not on Highland heather. As to Alister Chisholm, his handsome face alone will inform you that he inherits the true spirit of the Gael, and springs not from vassal lineage."

Hugh accelerated his pace as he concluded this brief sketch of the tribe, character, and prospects, of his friends; and greatly interested in its crew, Clifford watched the boat till it was hidden by the high banks that overhung the strand it was making for. Little then did he imagine how closely disaster tracked its lightsome course, or how long and bitterly he should remember

his last glance of its white and fluttering sail.

Leaving the voyagers to disembark, and reach the house when and how they pleased, Hugh guided his less-independent guests across the quagmire that surrounded the base of the hillock on which stood his home, and then, by a steep neglected path, led them to the door of the mansion. As yet Clifford beheld nothing to increase his admiration of the edifice, either in regard to site, construction, or state of repair. Notwithstanding it was situated on an eminence, the feet of some scores of cattle, repeatedly passing to and fro, added to the laziness of the housemaids, had formed an almost-impassable gutter in front. The windows were small and misplaced, and the hall-door minus a hinge, in consequence of which it was constantly unshut during the day. The interior however was better than its external appearance

ance entitled the beholder to expect. The rooms, though confined and wretchedly planned, were comfortably furnished; and the only thing novel to an English eye was the absence of a grate in the fireplace of the principal apartment. Turf and billets of bog-wood intermixed were piled up against a solitary bar protruding from the wall; and these soon formed so lively and genial a blaze, that Clifford almost came to agree with Hugh, that the hearth derived no comfort from being fenced in with steel and cast metal.

In the old laird no extraordinary character was developed, but in his composition there was much to admire and esteem, notwithstanding, like all other men, he had his peculiarities. He was blunt-spoken, and homely in his appearance, yet bearing, in his language and behaviour, those traces of good-breeding and polish which are more or less distinguishable in all Highlanders, what-

ever may be their rank. His wife was, in every respect, his counterpart, having entirely adopted, though on a reduced scale, his manners and opinions. Their two youngest daughters were growing girls, with the somewhat masculine yet pleasing expression of face, and angular form, prevalent in their country. Major Catanach, or "The Major," as he was simply styled, was the laird's brother, and as melancholy a relic of battle as government ever turned over to the invalid list. In the last of the many actions he had witnessed, an unlucky shot had severely wounded him in the head; and from that moment he became afflicted with almost-childish imbecility. Except on military topics connected with the campaigns in which he had shared, his memory was a blank; yet Craig Aral himself was not paid more deference to by every member of the household, nor would a personal insult have been so warmly resented, as any slight

slight or ridicule levelled at his unfortunate brother.

In the three strangers, whom Hugh's invitation had brought from the opposite side of the loch, the company, as he had previously prognosticated, found a pleasant addition. Allan Breck, as he was familiarly termed, was a personable young fellow, with more manners than fortune, and every desire in the world to serve the king in any capacity not derogatory to his royal descent, which, rumour said, made prince Charles Stuart his grandsire. Macrae of Fasnacloich was less indebted to mother Nature for comely looks; but, in lieu, she had given him a thorough bass voice, which accorded well in a duet with his friend Hugh, and a good bow-hand for the violin—no despicable talent in the Highlands. His manners might have been deemed bordering on clownishness, had not a lurking fondness for Miss Morag latterly smoothed down the

most prominent asperities; thereby shewing John of Badenyon to be quite correct, when he asserts, that

“ Love, ’tis said, gives one an air,  
And ev’n improves the mind.”

Of the three, however, young Chisholm claimed the superiority, whether in point of looks, intelligence, or bearing. He had scarcely passed the years of boyhood, and was just such a partner in a dance as Unn Macara, or the younger Misses Catanach, could desire.

The long ride of the morning had whetted the appetites of the Dun Rimmon party; full justice was therefore done to the plenteous, rather than varied dishes, that graced the good lady of Craig Aral’s dinner-table. Every one seemed bent on being happy for one day at least, come with the morrow what might, save Glen Eynort. The sullen scowl never for a moment left his brow; and though (along with Allan Breck,

Breck, who seldom made a demur about one glass more or less, provided he was in good company) he stiffly attacked Craig Aral's bottle, the gloomy cloud refused to pass away. Little heed nevertheless was paid to his morose humour; and conscious of this temporary insignificance, his ire augmented.

Obstinately refusing to join in the dance, which commenced with the night-fall, and expending his bitter gibes on all who dared to tempt them by remark, he sat solitary and shunned throughout the evening, with that same portentous malignity of visage which Clifford had seen herald Tarleton's misfortune, and which Lillias knew so well how to fear. To Unn alone did he shew any thing resembling courtesy, and this was solely because her cold, heartless nature had from the first displayed no partiality for her brother's preserver. When supper put an end to the amusements in which he disdained

to participate, he seated himself by her side, and, except by sneers and irony, betrayed not his sense of any other person's proximity. Both host and hostess were annoyed by this irascible and dissatisfied mood, but good-breeding withheld them from declaring it. Allan Breck and Fasnacloich were equally so, their good-humour and vivacity having more than once brought down on them some scoffing taunts; and had not regard for Hugh deterred him, the flashing eyes of the former frequently announced he had every inclination to come to an open rupture.

Owing to the untoward disposition thus manifested by one of the party, a gloominess and unwonted taciturnity came to overpower all. The song and the glass went round in vain, and finally Allan Breck and his companions rose, and intimated their resolution of departing. Every entreaty hospitality could suggest was made use of to detain them,  
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but the Highlanders were nettled by Glen Eynort's satire, and roused by the fumes of the punch-bowl into the stiffest obstinacy. Craig Aral's remarks concerning the strength and contrariety of the wind were despised, as were his wife's hints, that during the evening she had seen a coffin start from the fire and fall at Alistair Chisholm's foot, and that for many hours an ominous death-speal had sat perched on the candle directly opposite Fasnacloich. Across the loch they were positive to go, though all the winds of heaven were ahead, and all the coffins and death-speals superstition ever saw, in array, to intimidate them. Further resistance to their departure was thus proved useless, and all that could be done was to see them afloat. For this purpose, Hugh Catanach and Lochullin put on their bonnets; and at their request, Clifford also prepared to join the escort.

On inquiry, it was found that the old  
boatman

boatman who had brought them over had made so free with the *usquebaugh*, as to be scarcely able to walk; but, as the young men were fully competent to manage the boat without his assistance, this gave no trouble, farther than what promised to fall to the share of Allan Breck, he having volunteered to support the toper to the beach.

Clifford was the last to quit the room; and as he was on the point of so doing, he saw Glen Eynort take up the bonnet he usually wore, and approach Lillias.—“These pettish boys had better have a care that the fishes of Loch Ruart have not a banquet before the morning,” said he to her, in a low voice; “and in order to keep Lochullin from carrying his kindness so far as to put his life in danger, I must perforce bear them company to the beach, intrusive though I prove.”

“If you are really of opinion that there is danger,” exclaimed Lillias, in evident alarm, “endeavour to dissuade  
all

all from venturing on the water. Surely they will listen to Craig Aral——”

“They will listen to no mortal man,” returned Glen Eynort, contemptuously; “so let them go. Death will have his due, whether guilt or idiotism be the purveyor. At all events, I shall look to Lochullin.”

“And to——” Mr. Clifford, Lillias would have added; but sensible of her folly, she uttered not his name.

Glen Eynort however drew his own inference, and the crash of his teeth, as he shut them violently, proclaimed the ire he dared not vent in words.—“He shall be taken care of too,” was all he trusted himself to say, as he wheeled towards the door, on the threshold of which Clifford still lingered. The sentence was trivial in itself, but the manner in which it was spoken expressed volumes.

Instead of hurrying to overtake the string-on noisy youths, who, in “spite of  
of

of wind and weather," led the way with shouts and songs, Clifford sauntered on slowly; for he was anxious to give Glen Eynort an opportunity of putting his worst intents in practice. The inequality of the ground occasioned him to stumble as the latter reached his side, and the scornful laugh that ensued told the construction put upon it.—"You are pleased to be merry, sir," said Clifford, in an irritated tone, as he turned round with a face of defiance, which the darkness hid.

"But so so," was the answer, accompanied by an insulting chuckle; "I dipped not deep enough into Craig Aral's bowl, to have attained a buoyancy of spirit sufficient to encourage me in an attempt to cast a somerset."

"Doubtless you displayed a wonderful degree of temperance," observed Clifford, attacking him with his own weapons; "your self-adopted title of protector to us *pettish* boys, of itself, proves as much."

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“ Since Mr. Clifford thus gives me credit for temperance,” returned the other, “ he shall also confess that I am not destitute of liberality. As I have taken the title of protector to myself, be the dignity of an eaves-dropper and listener your award !”

“ Then I set aside a prior claim,” said Clifford ; “ for these titles, as well as the protectorate, are Glen Eynort’s right, to which let the Fall of Smoke bear witness !—I was not prepared for this modesty.”

“ Nor I for solving riddles,” was the succeeding remark, while the changing of the speaker’s voice told that the hint had struck home. “ But keep in remembrance, that whatever I licence my tongue to say, I have accustomed my arm to support. I bid you beware in time, rash stranger ! for as a stranger do I hold you, though for a time permitted to abuse hospitality and confidence in the situation of a guest. By my mother’s

ther's grave, I will overlook neither open insult nor skulking inuendo, while I retain the power and the inclination to silence babblers!"

"Your spirit soars high in words," returned Clifford, rushing recklessly on the quarrel he now saw inevitable; "and the moment you find it convenient to display this boasted prowess, hesitate not to give the proof. As to the mystery you say is couched in my foregoing expressions, it shall no longer be a matter of complaint. From accidentally overhearing a few insignificant words, uttered in a public company, you brand me as a listener. What appellation, in that case, can be sufficiently contemptuous for Macrimmon of Glen Eynort, who could meanly conceal himself amongst stones and rocks, for no other purpose than acting the part of a worthless spy? Shame on his spirit! it has nothing in common with that of a Highlander,

lander, and I hold it in sovereign despite!"

"And to recriminate," rejoined Glen Eynort, with wonderful self-command, but with the voice of one who has an intent of deadly malice at his heart; "what shall he be termed, who, under the semblance of a conscientious and deserving friend, carries treachery and poison into the heart of the family that cherish and confide in him? Is there a word black enough in all your barren language to denominate that man? I fear not; yet, in the presence of those he deceives, I will speedily try to discover one. Yes, yes, the traitor—the wolf in sheep's clothing, shall shortly be unmasked, and his character set forth in all its infamy. He shall prove, to his sorrow, that Highland dames have sterner guardians than a woman's will; and where he dared to look for love, shall find contempt, cold and marked as such perfidy deserves. Does Mr. Clifford

ford require a key to all this?" He stooped to pick up something, as he put the interrogatory.

"I require no key to discover that he who now addresses me is capable of all he lays to my charge," replied Clifford, cut to the heart by the conviction that his conduct had not been altogether free from blame; "and nothing can persuade me that Glen Eynort is not a character it becomes all honourable minds to detest."

During this conversation, the path which the star-light enabled them to adhere to had led into one of the deep narrow ravines by which the strand of the loch was accessible. A noisy stream brawled through it, and the lofty banks rose so precipitously, and were so fringed with wood, that it was scarcely practicable to advance without a guide. Becoming sensible of this, Clifford called to the party before to return and give him assistance, for his companion had  
suddenly

suddenly fallen to the rear, and seemed inclined to go no further. Fasnacloich and Alistair Chisholm accordingly retrograded about twenty yards, and took each an arm, while Lochullin and the others made a halt until they should form a junction. This effected, they again proceeded to advance; Allan Breck and the drunken boatman in front, Hugh Catanach and Lochullin in the centre, and the other three, linked arm and arm, bringing up the rear. Already was the mouth of the dell faintly discernible, and the dash of the surf plainly heard, when suddenly some massive body rushed through the air, and the next moment Lochullin, with a deep groan, sank to the ground. He however remained prostrate but for a few seconds, and then, without assistance, regained his feet.—“ I am murdered, I believe,” were his first words; “ and by whom, let those in rear of me tell.—Clifford,

ford! Clifford! could it be your mad hand that launched that fatal stone?"

"Thank God, I am not the wretch!" exclaimed Clifford, earnestly, but taking no further pains to repel the criminating inquiry at the moment, when he saw the youth reclining for support on the shoulder of Hugh Catanach.

The partial faintness however went off. Lochullin declared that he had been struck by something on the head, and that he already felt his bonnet soaked with blood, yet endeavoured to make light of his wound; and Glen Eynort having joined them, they all descended to the beach. The boat was quickly unmoored, the drunken boatman tumbled neck and heels on board; and, in spite of a squally, unfavourable breeze, and broken sea, her crew hoisted sail, and stood off.

Seeing their friends thus safely launched, the remainder of the party turned  
their

their steps homeward. Clifford was pained to observe that Lochullin took Glen Eynort's arm, in preference to his, and that he deigned not to address him during the walk; but when he did speak, pointedly named the others. Little conversation however passed, for the wounded man felt his strength declining, and was anxious to reach the house without delay. This he effected with difficulty; and as the situation of the various apartments prevented concealment, made his appearance, bloody as he was, in the midst of the terrified females. Lillias was the only individual whom the sight of his haggard countenance wholly overpowered. The instant she noticed the crimson drops oozing through his bonnet, she uttered a cry of wo, fixed her eyes upbraidingly on Glen Eynort, and swooned away.

Before she recovered, Lochullin had been removed to the apartment he was to occupy in common with Clifford, and  
his

his head examined. On cutting off the blood-matted hair covering the back of the skull, a severe contusion, evidently inflicted by a jagged piece of rock, displayed itself; but whether of a trifling or dangerous nature, none of the examiners were sufficiently skilled to determine. Farther than washing away the clotted gore, and carefully binding up the wound, nothing could be done; he was therefore put to bed, some homely medicaments administered, at the recommendation of the lady of the house, and a declaration made, that if the matter looked serious on the morrow, a messenger should be dispatched for a surgeon to give his attendance. Lillias was pacified by the assurance that he had received a mere scratch, and Glen Eynort took care to insinuate that it was inflicted by Clifford. A look of incredulity was the only answer he obtained.

CHAPTER VIII.  
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“ The warmest heart, the brightest eye,
Is earliest doom’d to love and die.
The sweetest, gentlest, and the best,
Seek earliest out the land of rest.
The noblest mind, the bravest spirit,
Is briefly doom’d *life* to inherit.
This world holds nought that’s worth the trust
Of *earthly* love, since thou art dust.”

WHEN Clifford retired to bed, Lochullin was in a sound sleep ; consequently no conversation passed between them. After seeing his wound dressed, he had returned to the parlour, and, as far as lay in his power, explained the circumstances under which the blow had been received ; but an account so vague only served to increase the general perplexity. Craig Aral, in the goodness of his heart, was inclined to believe that a fragment

had rolled down from the cliffs beneath which they were walking; his son expressed himself of a similar opinion; but neither Clifford nor Glen Eynort coincided in this, the most charitable construction that could be put upon it. The former felt convinced, in his own mind, that the rushing sound of the missile, as it clove the air, betrayed a greater impetus than it could possibly have acquired by its own weight, in a descent of from fifty to a hundred feet. He had also a faint recollection of having seen the object, while in flight between him and the sky, visible at the mouth of the dell, and a strong impression remained that its direction was horizontal. That it came from behind, was a truth sufficiently obvious from the part injured; and to Lochullin's knowledge of his being immediately in rear of him, did he attribute the implied accusation that he was the person guilty. As to Glen Eynort, he gave himself

himself no trouble to solve the enigma. He corroborated nothing, neither did he stand forward to confute; but, as he listened, there sat an equivocal smile on his face, which even those best acquainted with him knew not how to construe.

When this consultation ended, and all separated for the night, Clifford soon found that he courted repose in vain. The breadth of a small apartment was all the space that intervened between him and Lochullin; he heard, with painful solicitude, his low quick breathing, and all his strength of mind was insufficient to reassure him, that the mutual friendship hitherto subsisting was not about to suffer decrease, if not annihilation. The threats of Glen Eynort, with whom he had already, in imagination, planned a full and early reckoning—the dryness of sir Colin, and, above all, the injurious suspicions which the young man himself had rashly given utterance to, were each, in their turn, reviewed as

harbingers of disunion. To meet the storm bravely—to cast off, with the indignation that became him, the foul aspersions that malice and misconception might level—and, lastly, to visit, on the guilty head of his enemy, that punishment he conceived himself entitled to inflict, were what he prepared sternly to perform. Overpowered by the fatigue he had undergone on the preceding day, and the subsequent irritation of his mind, he at length dropped into an uneasy slumber, from which he awoke not until roused by the voice of Lochullin. It was broad daylight, and Clifford inquired anxiously how he felt himself.

“ I can hardly say,” was the answer, in his usual kind tone of voice, “ but I hope any disagreeable feeling will soon go off. To tell you the truth, Clifford, I have lain awake for the last two hours, fretting myself at the surly manner in which I treated you last night. What,
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in the name of every thing unjust and unfriendly, could have tempted me to demean myself so harshly, even admitting the fact that it was you who, in the height of frolic, gave me this broken head?"

"And can it really be that you think me capable of such barbarity, however thoughtless and unguarded the moment?" exclaimed Clifford, in a tone of reproach. "Lochullin, my friend! believe me, I hold your blood and life too precious, to lightly shed the one or endanger the other."

"There were three of you in rear of me, Clifford," returned Lochullin, "and the blow came from behind. I was thinking of you at the moment I was struck down, and forgetting you had companions, blundered out some distrustful words. Forgive and forget them; and whether Fasnacloich or Alistair Chisholm did the mischief, let it not be known. It was done in light-hearted-

ness and innocence of intent, and shall not be noted down in memory to their disadvantage."

"I must not be indebted for my acquittal to the implication of others equally guiltless," said Clifford, firmly. "My companions had each an arm interlinked with mine, and it was as impossible for either to hurl the stone without my knowledge, as it was for me to do so without theirs. In this mysterious business, I feel thankful that we were all so situated as to have it in our power to stand forward to each other's entire exculpation. At breakfast I shall certainly insist on a messenger being dispatched, requesting them to appear and corroborate what I have averred."

"There is no occasion to raise such a hubbub about a trifling scratch," returned Lochullin, thoughtfully. "Yet it is strange—pray where was Glen Ey-nort at the moment?"

"I know not exactly," answered Clifford,

ford, perceiving his friend's suspicions were taking the same bent as his own; "but unquestionably he must have been the last of the party. He overtook me a short time before I entered the dell; and when in the darkest part, I fancied that he turned back, either owing to the roughness of the path, or to some altercation that passed betwixt us. His reappearance, however, after you were hurt, proved this supposition incorrect."

"It did so," rejoined the other; "but, in case further inquiry gives birth to more pain than pleasure, let us not pry deeper into the matter. Give me your word, that you forgive suspicions which I here solemnly retract, and that the punishment shall be nothing worse than the reproaches of my own heart."

Clifford gave the desired surety, and Lochullin, finding conversation injurious, consented to remain quiet till breakfast. As the morning was already far advanced, the other deserted his bed, and sal-

lied forth, with the hope of encountering Glen Eynort, with whom he was anxious to come to a proper understanding. In this he was disappointed, for the latter did not quit his apartment until the whole party, with the exception of the invalid, had assembled for the morning repast. As might be expected, it passed over heavily. No one was in spirits to maintain a conversation of longer duration than the interchange of a few sentences regarding the event of the preceding night, the state of the sufferer, or the boisterous breeze that had rocked the house for the last twelve hours. Clifford felt uncomfortable, and distrustful of the looks of all; and descrying from the window a white sail flapping amid the foam of the loch, and evidently belonging to some boat coming from the farther side, he hastily left the house, and bent his steps towards the beach. He flattered himself that it contained the merry trio he had parted

parted with over-night, and, by anticipation, exulted in the speedy revolution in his favour their arrival would create. At the breakfast-table he had disdained to speak in his own exculpation, because he considered his so doing would be derogatory to the dignity of conscious innocence. He postponed all defence, until, from the mouth of others, ample justice should be done him.

As the wind had changed with the daybreak, he reached the landing-place before the boat, and, in a perturbed state of mind, sat down on a crag to watch its approach. As it neared the land, he could discern that it carried but two persons, and these he finally distinguished to be a common peasant and Allan Breck Mac-an-Rhi. While yet at a distance, the doleful countenance of the latter proclaimed him the bearer of disastrous news. He waved his hand with a gesture of melancholy recognition, and Clifford felt it was feverish and clammy,

as he assisted him to step ashore.—
“Your friends, Fasnacloich and Chisholm?” gasped forth the Englishman, as he scanned his lineaments with a glance of horrid inquiry.

The Highlander looked at him mournfully for a moment, and then, as he pointed to the loch, said, with quivering lips—“They are at rest!”

Clifford had seen comrades fall by his side in battle; he had smoothed the pillow of the dying, whether brought to dissolution by sword or by pestilence; but in neither instance had the throes of expiring nature smitten him so thoroughly to the heart as these four words. It was not selfish considerations that gave this shock the superiority—it was the instantaneous contrast he felt impelled to make between the hilarity and noise the unfortunate had shared in on the bygone evening, and the eternal silence and incogitancy that had so soon succeeded. He had parted with them a
few

few short hours before, their health vigorous, and their spirits contemning all earthly peril. In that transient space they had gasped their last, and found a grave beneath the weltering billows. Their souls had already tasted of immortality, and all that remained of them on earth was the frail tenements, whose boastful promise of long continuing impassable to death, a moment had served to prove presumptuous.

When the first shudder of conviction had passed, and Allan Breck gained self-possession sufficient for the undertaking, they proceeded towards the house; Clifford gathering, by the way, the more minute circumstances of the disaster. It appeared, that notwithstanding the violent headwind and strong ebb of the tide, they had completed better than half the voyage in safety, when a sudden gust, streaming down one of the narrow glens, capsized their frail bark in an instant. With the exception of the

intoxicated boatman, who sunk without a struggle, all managed to regain the skiff by swimming; and finding it impossible to right her, mounted on the keel. Notwithstanding their proximity to the land prevented them from being exposed to a heavy sea at the time of the accident, yet a short trial convinced them, that should they be driven into rougher water, as the setting of the tide rendered probable, they dared not trust to maintaining for any duration their shelterless seat. The cold, which speedily began to benumb their limbs, and the rapidity with which they drifted towards the mouth of the gulf, also served to corroborate this disheartening proof of their peril, when, at the moment all hopes of salvation had departed, Allan Breck was swept off by a wave, and hurled to such a distance, that when he recovered himself, his friends were rendered invisible by the intervening waves. Though fully assured that he was doomed

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ed to perish, and almost incapable of exertion, from the torpidity of his limbs, he nevertheless, with that instinctive feeling which departs but with dissolution, turned his face towards the shore, and combated manfully against the surge. In the end his efforts were crowned with success, and he reached the land, though so spent with exertion, as to be, for a time, necessitated to remain prostrate on the beach. When his strength in some measure returned, he managed to crawl to the nearest cottage, which his knowledge of the country enabled him easily to find; and while endeavouring to reinvigorate his weakened frame, by such means as a peasant's hovel afforded, the owner and his son set off to examine the strand, in hopes Fasnacloich or Chisholm might likewise be cast ashore.

About sunrise however they returned from an unsuccessful search, but which they readily renewed, under the guidance

dance of the survivor. In the end the capsized boat was descried rolling amid the waves, and drifting inward again with the rising tide; but there was no one on its keel. No doubt remained on the mind of Allan Breck, but that his hapless companions had been unable to keep their hold, when driven to the mouth of the loch, where they would be exposed to all the fury of the open sea, and inevitably find that watery grave from which he had been, almost miraculously, preserved. The melancholy duty of announcing their fate to their relatives was thus imposed on him; but this task he felt it impossible to perform alone. His reason for making Craig Aral the first place to which he directed his course, was to solicit Hugh Catanach to bear him company on his errand of sorrow.

This narrative, and the comments thereon, occupied him during their walk from the beach to the house. When,
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on arriving there, it was more widely promulgated, wailing and lamentation resounded on all sides. Allan Breck's hand was wrung in agony by every member of the household, from the "laird himsel" down to the lowest kitchen drudge, and he was made again and again to repeat his dismal tale. Glen Eynort coolly congratulated him on his own fortunate escape, but the generous-hearted Highlander was in no mood to think he had cause of thankfulness.—“Let me think of those that are gone,” was his stern reply, “not of my own worthless life. Such a man as I am—without friends, without fortune, is death's fair prey in the field, or on the wave—in green age, as when withering. But Fasnacloich was the son of a mother who has no joy left behind—no other child to inherit her honest name; and young Alister Chisholm, the darling and hope of his whole race. Who, when lives such as these are taken, can
idly

idly rejoice that fate has granted a few years more to Allan Mac-an-Rhi?"

The voice of mourning soon reached the ears of Lochullin, and, in the general consternation, no attention being paid to his repeated summons, he ultimately rose, dressed himself, and hurried down to the parlour.—“ This has been altogether a visit of mischance,” said he to Craig Aral, when made acquainted with the cause of lamentation; “ therefore it is better we conclude it now. Sorrow has come in our train, and with us may it depart! Lillias—Unn—Mr. Clifford, in half-an-hour we start for home.”

Many objections were, of course, alleged against such a measure, but without sufficing to alter his determination. Though his glittering, humid eye, and feverish hand, spoke to the contrary, he persisted in saying he was equal to the exertion of an instantaneous return, and preparations were made accordingly.

The

The same hour that saw Allan Breck and Hugh Catanach depart on their mournful mission, witnessed the Dun Rimmon party marshalled and ready to commence their journey ; and before the boat carrying the former had gained the farther shore, Clifford, from the brow of a barren hill, took his last look of Craig Aral and Loch Ruart.

Lochullin had mounted his horse with seeming ease ; but it soon became apparent that he had overrated his strength, and that though he might reach Dun Rimmon, the consequences promised to be serious. The late disasters had almost banished personal resentment from the breast of Clifford ; he therefore evinced no desire to renew the over-night altercation with Glen Eynort, but, watchful and attentive to his sick friend, rode close by his side, leaving the ladies to be escorted by the other. Whether it arose from this pleasing duty having devolved on him, or whether some undivulged

divulged cause for good-humour existed in his own heart, cannot be determined; but so it was that the cloud, which, during the preceding day, had never, for a moment, deserted Glen Eynort's brow, in the course of this ride rolled off entirely. With the exception of Clifford, he was affable to all, smiled at every remark that could possibly bear a smile, and sometimes merely from the frolics of his own fancy; and more than once even whistled a few bars of a lively pibroch, in the midst of some affecting comments on the castaways of Loch Ruart. He deigned not so much as a look to the Englishman—far less did he sneer at or address him; and, in short, the suspicious Lillias herself was compelled to acknowledge his evident improvement, and internally confess that she might have wronged him.

They reached Dun Rimmon about sunset; but it was with infinite difficulty that Lochullin bore up against the languor

guor that was stealing over him, and concluded the journey. Glen Eynort had voluntarily rode on as *avant-courier*, to prepare sir Colin for his grandson's arrival; consequently the whole castle was in a state of agitation when he was lifted off his horse, and carried into the presence of the chief. Some bitter expressions in Gaelic escaped the old man's lips, when he beheld the flushed face, and felt the quick throbbing pulse, of the invalid; but both the latter and Glen Eynort hastily answered it in the same tongue, and Clifford could only guess that it alluded to him, and was of unfavourable import. To Lillias it seemed to sound the knell of despair, for, with a low cry of unutterable woe, she pressed her hands on her ears, and fled the apartment.

A few minutes served to convince Lochullin, that his strength would not support him in his struggle to take his place at the dinner-table; he was therefore

fore assisted to his own room, and a *gille* dispatched to insure a surgeon's attendance on the morrow. At his friend's desire, and notwithstanding the evident aversion to the measure shewn by sir Colin, Clifford became his nurse, thereby leaving the coast more clear for the machinations of his enemy. But that circumstance was of trivial importance, assured, as he felt, that not only Lochullin, but Lillias, held him innocent. He was disgusted with all but themselves, and totally reckless of what opinion was entertained regarding him, by people who daily displayed an utter want of stability and justice. All he waited for was to hear his friend pronounced out of danger. That done, he purposed to quit Dun Rimmon instantly, though nearly a week required to elapse before he completed the promised term of his visit.

Throughout the evening he was little disturbed by the intrusion of those he
had

had no desire to see ; but the females made frequent inquiries after his charge. Aunt Marjory appeared with a huge volume in her hand, which she termed “ Buchan’s Domestic Medicine,” and would fain have evinced her surgical skill in a minute inspection and lecture on the nature of the wound ; but in this she was not indulged, and therefore left the room in high dudgeon. Lillias would gladly have remained by her brother’s side, but her grandfather’s commands chained her to Glen Eynort’s society. Unn was every half-hour in the sick chamber, having been prevailed upon to act in the double capacity of messenger and spy to the chieftain—a post for which a stony, selfish heart well qualified her.

Towards midnight, Clifford was grieved to remark that the patient came to betray an incoherency of speech, and slight symptoms of delirium. In consequence of this observation, he resolved
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not to quit his side, and was rewarded for his watching, when, in the morning, this alarming accompaniment of fever disappeared. The dressing of his wound, however, seemed to fatigue him greatly; and a peevishness was perceptible in his answers to all inquiries, which declared him in no state of amendment. As the day advanced, this grew more apparent, and anxiously was the medical man's arrival looked for. The spirits of the sufferer also underwent a revolution; for, grasping the Englishman's hand with kindly warmth, whilst with the other he held that of Lillias, who had stole in to see him, he said—"I feel this anxiety on my account more than I can express, and only regret that a short time must prove it vain. I grieve not at my fate, since it is the will of Heaven that I thus early depart; but I could have wished that vague apprehensions of impending evil to those I love had not threatened to embitter my last hours."

Lillias

Lillias could not control her grief, and Clifford, likewise deeply affected, could scarcely articulate the hopes he hardly ventured to cherish. Lochullin smiled faintly when he heard long life promised him.—“ You are a flattering prophet, Clifford,” said he, in return, “ but, I fear, a false one. There is that at my heart which tells me I am called away, and whether the presentiment is well founded or erroneous, it is proper I prepare for the worst. In the impetuosity and rashness of momentary irritation, I foolishly made use of an expression which tended to fix on you, my friend, the guilt of having laid me here. For that act of injustice I have already obtained your forgiveness, but have not atoned sufficiently to satisfy my own heart. Lillias, promise to your dying brother, and in the face of Heaven, that you will testify my declaration of Clifford’s innocence; that if all the world should calumniate and seek to find him
guilty,

guilty, you, resting your conviction on the last words of a passing soul, will still adhere to the affirmation, that his was not the hand which hurled that fatal stone."

Lillias was drowned in tears, yet imagining that it would quiet her brother, she answered with firmness—"The promise is yours, and no earthly consideration shall tempt me to break it. My heart acquitted him from the first, and, I fear, too truly pointed out, as the author, him from whom all mischief seems to emanate."

"But surmises tending to criminate any one must not be promulgated," said her brother, divining her thoughts. "I fall by an untoward accident, not by malice; therefore let no man be charged with my death. Yet a timid girl may bear but feeble testimony in your behalf, Clifford; so it were better I secured you sir Colin's at once. Lillias, go entreat my grandfather to pay me a visit; and

and, if he is in the way, invite Glen Eynort to bear him company. Who knows but the latter may find a death-bed a spectacle improving to his heart?"

Lillias left the room in compliance with his request, and during the time she was absent he lay silent, as if endeavouring to arrange his ideas preparatory to the interview; but the unusual wildness gathering in his eye declared the attempt fruitless. It was an interval of deep despondency and awe to Clifford. He saw before him, with the dew of death on his face, a being whom he had become attached to in an uncommon manner, and who promised, in no mean degree, to supply his want of any fraternal tie. There was also strong reason to suppose that the missile which robbed him of life was aimed at another head—the head of him who was thus doomed to mourn his untimely end. In that moment Clifford almost cursed the selfishness that had impelled him to re-

peat his visit to Dun Rimmon; nor could he divest himself of the notion, that he had cheated the king of terrors only by surrendering Lochullin to his scythe. From reveries so painful, the return of Lillias, accompanied by sir Colin and Glen Eynort, procured him a transient respite.

Notwithstanding the capacity of reflection, and coherency of speech, he had so lately manifested, the dying man received the visitors with strong symptoms of delirium. Instead of greeting them with kindly recognition, his glance wandered restlessly from face to face, and a deep silence prevailed. Alarmed at this unexpected change, Lillias drew near, and bending over him, intimated that sir Colin and Glen Eynort had obeyed his summons, and were in his presence. The name of the latter appeared to possess a cabalistic power over his darkened mind; for on hearing it he suddenly sat erect, and waving his hand
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in a frenzied manner, exclaimed—"Glen Eynort! Glen Eynort! what brings him here? Comes he to see how a murdered kinsman can die, or to tell what dastard hand flung that vile stone in the Glack of Craig Aral? Like an idiot, I said it was Clifford's, but—no, no, no! Men, when they aim at life, should strike at the heart, and perpetrate the deed at once. It is the height of cruelty to doom a wretch to pine and die in madness!"

"Lochullin," said Glen Eynort, whose pallid lips bore witness to the manner in which he was affected, "I am here by your desire. If my presence is disagreeable, I will depart, and leave you with dearer friends."

"Ay, do, do!" returned the other; "and if you meet with Fasnacloich or Alistair Chisholm, send them here without delay, for Clifford needs their support. Hollo! hollo! if humanity is a Highland virtue, now is the time to dis-

play it; for a boat is sinking in the surges of Loch Ruart, and Clifford's fair fame hangs on the lives of those two men who sit shivering on its keel. Will no man risk his life for his fellow-creatures, and drag them from the ravenous billows? Shame on ye, Highlanders! is it for you to fear the deep-sea wave? I would breast these foamy ridges myself, but there is a feebleness and pain that will not permit it. That base blow—yet, Clifford, I blamed you not; neither said I it was Glen Eynort. Alas! alas! the boat still drifts on the tide, but her keel is bare—the tremblers cling to it no longer. That was a sweeping sea that carried them off in its bosom, and whiter than the fairest shroud that mortal hands might weave. Clifford! Clifford! you will never find them in its wrappings!”

Fear and grief were portrayed in every countenance during this frenzied harangue. At its conclusion, the speaker
sunk

sunk back in a state of exhaustion, and for a time the sobs of Lillias alone interrupted the stillness of the chamber of death. At length Glen Eynort breathed into sir Colin's ear a few words in Gaelic, which he suffered not to transpire. In a moment the chieftain's sorrow was transformed into fury. He advanced hastily towards Clifford, dragged him by the arm closer to the bed, and pointing to the prostrate form of his grandson, exclaimed, in a voice hoarse with rage and wo — "Man of an accursed hand! behold your work!"

Had the archangel blown his awful blast at that moment, Clifford could have felt no more. His knees knocked against each other, his cheeks blanched to the ghastliness of the grave, and his lips quivered so violently, that it was in vain he sought by words to repel the odious imputation. But the ear of the dying man had also caught its import, and, with preternatural strength, he again

sat upright, in order to be his defender. —“ It is as I feared,” he exclaimed, in a hollow sepulchral tone; “ and Clifford, my bosom friend! he who, when a stranger, perilled his life on my account, will be arraigned for a crime, the true author of which I may not name. Hear me, my revered grandfather! Let not calumny defame the innocent, or injustice disgrace your hospitable dwelling. Keep in remembrance that I lay guilt to no man’s charge, neither do I permit my kindred to hunt for a foul revenge. And to you, Ninian Macrimmon, be my last words spoken. Banish malice and envy from your heart, as you wish hereafter to enjoy peace, or go down respected to the grave. Before my God do I declare, that Clifford—that Clifford——”

He clasped his hands tightly across his forehead for a few seconds, then, with a gesture expressive of what his tongue refused to utter, caught hold of Clifford,

Clifford, and strove to unite him with sir Colin in a friendly clasp. The old man sternly recoiled, and, with a look of wo, Lochullin seized the hand of his sister, and placed it within the Englishman's. For an instant a gleam of satisfaction lingered on his face, after which he suddenly restored his head to its pillow. The heralds of death rapidly made their appearance, and finally, with a shudder and a sigh, the warm-hearted, generous Lochullin lay stretched out a corpse.

Lamentation and despair usually follow in the train of dissolution, but seldom or never are wrath and discord in their company. The rugged spirit of the living is so humbled, and so chastened, by witnessing the perishable nature of the human body, that the defiling passions of the heart have no power to play; but round the deathbed of Æneas Macara, "hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness," were called on to

appear. While Lillias yet lay insensible by the side of the departed—while the warmth of life still existed in the insensate frame, and the glassy set eye remained unshut, sir Colin, lifting up his stern condemnatory voice, saluted Clifford by the name of *murderer*! On the eve of leaving the room, to procure assistance for the removal of Lillias, he was flung from the door, with a rude, unmannerly grasp, while the chieftain exclaimed—“ Murderer of my boy! you go not hence till surrendered to that punishment a crime so monstrous merits. Till then I hold you prisoner in Dun Rimmon.”

Clifford required nothing more to unnerve and render him tractable. He mechanically seated himself, in a stupor of mind that promised to be eternal, and what afterwards passed before his eyes left no deeper impression than a troubled dream.

CHAPTER IX.
~~~~~

Thou stood'st as stands a lovely tree,  
That, all unbroke, though gently bent,  
Still waves, with fond fidelity,  
Its boughs above a monument.  
The winds might rend, the skies might pour ;  
But there thou wert, and still would'st be,  
Devoted, in the stormiest hour,  
To shed thy weeping leaves o'er me.      BYRON.

THROUGHOUT the night that succeeded Lochullin's death, grief and wailing reigned in Dun Rimmon Castle ; yet the spirit of vengeance slumbered not. Under the superintendence of Glen Ey-nort, Clifford was removed to an apartment, looked upon as calculated for the reception of a criminal who might be bent on escape ; and when the night set in, a sentinel was stationed in the passage into which it opened. Man is so  
N 5      prone

prone to condemn his fellow on the slightest grounds, that the whole household gave implicit credence to the tale of his guilt; and in compliment to the memory of his victim, evinced the most commendable anxiety to prejudge his cause, and hold up his name as meriting signal detestation. Had it not been that it might ultimately have brought down condign punishment on their own heads, they would readily have taken upon themselves the duty of executioners, and forestalled the rights of the law, by tearing him limb from limb. Glen Eynort, however, kept this blood-thirsty spirit under due control, by setting forth the danger of such a measure, and the far more complete satisfaction all would experience in seeing him strung up ignominiously like a dog. When the first hour of turbulence and consternation had passed, messengers were dispatched to various parts of the country, in order to publish the dire event.

event. Two of these started for Craig Aral, for the purpose of summoning the laird, in his capacity of justice of the peace, to ride over and take immediate precognition of the matter. Hugh Catnach and Allan Breck were also requested to give their attendance, and bear witness for or against, as the case might be. The surgeon, who had arrived too late to lend assistance in any other way, was detained to bear testimony relative to the cause of death.

Rendered for a time insensible, by the shock of her brother's unexpected demise, Lillias had been carried in that state to her own apartment, where she was permitted to indulge her grief undisturbed until the ensuing morning. Owing to this circumstance, she remained in ignorance of what had succeeded, and totally unsuspecting that her cup of sorrow was not yet full. About the breakfast-hour, aunt Marjory made her appearance, prepared to recommend re-

signation, by stringing together the names of a long catalogue of worthies who had practised it to their imperishable honour; but for once the erudite lady betrayed that it was easier to give precept than example.—“He was the pride and hope of his name, Lillias,” said she, joining in her niece’s lamentation; “and, shed for him, tears will not disgrace us. In my studious and moody hours, I have sometimes longed to pierce futurity, and discover which of our family-circle was to acquire that sublimity of knowledge which the freed and purely-spiritual soul riots in after death. I invariably set it down, as a matter of course, that the silvered head of Macrimmon was first to fall. Æneas looked a sapling so fresh and so green, that I never doubted but that he would shoot and flourish vigorously, long after I myself had become a withered leaf. Truly may we exclaim, in the words of the poet,

‘ Death,

‘Death, ere thou shalt strike another,  
Gentle, good, and wise as he,  
Time shall throw his dart at thee.’

But bear up, my child, and remember the high duties that have now devolved on you. In your person has this fatal event concentrated the hopes and honours of an ancient race.”

“I understand you, aunt,” returned Lillias; “but remind me not, at such a moment, of my dreary responsibility. Alas, alas! that I should live to inherit *his* possessions! Timid and feeble-minded as I am, it was never designed that I should rule!”

“A vicegerent will soon make his appearance,” said aunt Marjory. “As the old hawering song goes, alluding to a female possessing a handsome dowry,

‘Take and set her on a hill,  
The wind will blow a man till her.’

Glen Eynort, for instance——”

“Name

“ Name him not,” exclaimed Lillias, in a voice of agony. “ A curse attends on that man, go where he will, and I tremble at the very idea of the appellation I feel tempted to confer on him. The walls of Dun Rimmon ought incessantly to shriek *death* while they enclose him. For the sake of the departed I will be silent, but may God keep these eyes from ever more beholding him !”

“ You are raving, Lillias,” returned her aunt, “ and in your delirium confound Glen Eynort with your brother’s murderer. Thank Heaven, our kinsman can lay his hand on his heart, and, with more truth than the hero of the drama, exclaim, ‘ Thou can’st not say I did it.’ It was a stranger that ‘ did the deed,’ and on the vile Saxon name of Clifford fall the infamy !”

“ Clifford !” shrieked the horror-struck girl—“ is it Clifford they have arraigned ?”

“ Even

“ Even so,” was the reply ; “ and well may you look incredulous, for that countenance had certainly not the expression that betokens a man of blood. But sir Colin affirms his guilt, Glen Eynort swears he has ‘ proofs strong as holy writ,’ and even Hugh Catanach and Allan Breck Mac-an-Rhi are prepared to speak to his condemnation.”

“ They will condemn him falsely then,” exclaimed Lillias, energetically ; “ and if so, be his death visited on the black heart that worked his ruin ! But I will not crouch timidly in my chamber, while bloodhounds run down my brother’s friend. I will confront and denounce the vile author in the face of the whole world. No, no ! Clifford shall not be sacrificed, if my feeble word can avail ! Where is he now ?—where is my grandfather ?”

“ Be pacified, Lillias,” returned aunt Marjory, alarmed at what she conceived a burst of mental derangement. “ Sir Colin

Colin is in the great hall, assisting Craig Aral and MacCorquodale of Ben Ard to hold the scales of justice. There too are Glen Eynort, Hugh Catanach, and Allan Breck ; and there the wretch whom it becomes us all to abominate."

"And there also must be Lillias Mac-ara," added her niece, with suddenly-acquired composure. "If Clifford is before his accusers, it is meet that I give my evidence along with others. As the holder of my brother's dying declaration, I may assist in throwing some light on the case ; so, in kindness to your sister's child, bear me company to the hall."

"As you will it, dear," answered aunt Marjory, dubious as to whom her testimony was to favour. "All I entreat is, that you will keep in remembrance what we have scripture for—'whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.'"

Lillias made no rejoinder to this counsel, but proceeded to arrange her dress  
with

with the utmost celerity. In a few minutes she had completed what necessity required, and then, supported by her aunt, descended to the hall.

With Clifford the night had passed in a manner too horrible for description. Left to solitude and darkness, Reason had gradually regained her energy, and terrific were the meditations in which she rioted. He had heard himself denounced as a murderer—as the murderer of a man he had valued as a brother, and between whose breast and danger he would joyfully have thrown his own; and so astounding was the shock, so hostile to every feeling of fortitude he was endued with, that, in a short space of time, fancy had traced his course to a jail and fetters, to conviction, and to the gallows. He forgot that a false accusation had been preferred against him—that all hope of exculpation was not yet set aside. He only remembered that misfortune was his

his birthright, and that in having his fair fame blighted, his doom was pronounced. In such a night Reason totters on her seat; and recoiling from the dismal path yet to be traversed, the shrinking soul would fain, by one bound, gain the haven of eternity.

But this deep despondency, in a certain measure, fled with the darkness; and as he watched from the windows of his prison the rising of a glorious sun, his spirit seemed to receive fresh vigour to oppose the tide of adversity. On revolving the events of the two preceding days in his mind, he saw not so much cause to anticipate a disastrous issue to his misfortune; at all events, he was determined not to perish without an effort towards his own salvation.

When the domestic stationed as sentinel at his door brought his morning repast, it was accompanied with the intimation, that, early in the forenoon, recognition

cognition of his alleged crime would be taken ; and for this he was requested to prepare accordingly.

The recommendation was not thrown away ; and when Glen Eynort and a troop of menials appeared, to conduct him before this preparatory tribunal, they found him calm and collected. It was with some satisfaction, that, notwithstanding the sedate, unconcerned look his enemy attempted to maintain, he could trace anxiety and restlessness in every lineament. No conversation passed between them, and in a few minutes the accused stood before his judges.

The hall was a spacious apartment, only thrown open on momentous occasions, such as marriage and death, and, it may be added, in times of public tumult ; for the chieftain took pride in proclaiming that it had seen more than one meeting about the period of “ the forty-five.” Its walls were ornamented with numerous weapons of Highland warfare, trophies

trophies torn from the deer and the eagle, and grim portraits of chiefs, who had, for more than a century, been food for the worm.

Many of these worthies presented mutilated faces, in consequence of some sharp-pointed instrument having pierced the canvas; but what to others might have appeared a misfortune was, to sir Colin, their chief recommendation; for the bayonets of the Hanoverian soldiery had done the damage, in the heat of their resentment at the Clan Rimmon's obstinate adherence to the house of Stuart.

Nor were the disfigured portraits of his ancestors the only memorial he possessed of unfortunate royalty. Under the same canopy where, in company with Craig Aral and MacCorquodale of Ben Ard he was seated, had sat prince Charles Edward; and never did he occupy it without retrospection rousing all his latent animosity against the Sassenach. On the present occasion, a table,  
covered

covered with books, papers, and writing apparatus, stood before him ; and the major part of the household and neighbouring tenantry thronged the opposite extremity of the hall.

A low murmur of detestation rose from the assembly, as Clifford was led in; and his knowledge of Gaelic was sufficient to make him understand that his doom was already decided in the general opinion. For a moment his glance hastily scrutinized the mass of faces, and more particularly such as appertained to females, but it rested not on that he sought. Unn, with her proud, unpitying stare, sat near to her grandfather; but Lillias was nowhere to be discerned. Unheeding the solemn adjuration of her brother, she seemed to have deserted him in his need, and desperation nerved his heart as he admitted the conviction.

Craig Aral was the first that broke silence, after the prisoner had been led up  
to

to his proper station.—“ Mr. Clifford,” said he, with commiseration of look and voice, “ common expressions cannot describe the sorrow I feel at having so soon exchanged the duties of a landlord for those of a judge, more especially as this distressing occurrence may be looked upon as having happened under my very roof. When I prepared to bid you welcome, I trusted that we should pass such a happy season together, as either might for years look back to with joy; but, to my sorrow do I say it! the inhabitants of Craig Aral shall never see a darker day. Honest Fasnacloich and our brave young Alistair Chisholm beheld not another sunrise; but these came fairly by their death—the sea, not man, has to account for it. But Lochullin’s fate was different: in the Glack, leading from my house to the beach, he received a base and treacherous blow, of which a surgeon declares it his opinion that he died. You, I grieve to intimate, are the per-

son charged with having flung, with a malicious intent, the stone that slew him. Is there any thing you can bring forward in defence? any thing that can be adduced in opposition to your being immediately delivered over to be tried by the laws of your country?"

"Much! much!" answered Clifford, with emphasis. "I am innocent of this heinous crime; and such shall be my declaration, though falsehood and perversion should bring me to the scaffold! But, before I say more, I would know who are my accusers, and where are the proofs against me?"

"Both shall speedily appear!" exclaimed sir Colin, no longer able to maintain his self-command. "Stand forth, Glen Eynort, and confront the murderer to his teeth."

Glen Eynort obeyed, and was requested to give his deposition, that it might be taken down. At first his faltering step and unsettled mien evinced  
reluctance,

reluctance, and it seemed to Clifford as though he was startled at the enormity of his guilt. Suddenly he shook off this trepidation, and, with the bold, relentless front of a man who must advance or perish, entered on his task. In the outset, the affection subsisting between him and the defunct was descanted on, in the most pathetic terms ; then he touched on Clifford's introduction at the Queensferry, and did full justice to his intrepidity on that occasion ; next he led his auditors on to the Englishman's arrival at Dun Rimmon, confessed that circumstances had early engendered suspicions disadvantageous to the stranger ; and added, that he soon came to discover that the want of confidence was reciprocal.—“ Yes, I saw he was worthless,” were his words, “ and from that reason I suspected and avoided him. This he cannot deny, nor has he tried to conceal that the aversion was mutual. It may appear somewhat extraordinary that I pre-  
mise

mise thus my deposition ; but I desire ‘ nought to extenuate—nought set down in malice.”

Here he paused, as if overcome by the keenness of his feelings, but in a short space resumed—

“ I will dwell no longer on these matters, but conduct you at once to the scene of disaster, or rather to the time when, in company with Hugh Catanach, and the three young men from the farther shore of the loch, we left Craig Aral’s mansion. I take no credit to myself when I aver, that I was the most sedate and rational of the party ; for, during the evening, I had been too sad at heart to join in the mirth around me. It was from this disinclination to noise, that I lingered behind with an intention of not visiting the beach, until Miss Lillias Macara’s entreaty, that I would look to the safety of her brother, altered my resolution. The prisoner, from what motive I know not, had also kept in the rear.

He had heard a casual remark, that fell from me, relative to the exuberance of spirits manifested by himself and others, and feeling his consequence hurt by it, I was assailed with rude and threatening language. I need not put you in remembrance, gentlemen, that one bearing the name of Macrimmon is not accustomed to listen to reproach in silence; yet, on this occasion, I did bear much, from a sense that he derived his bravery solely from too copious libations of our mountain dew. That I mentally resolved on chastising him, when in a more temperate humour, I will not go to deny; and, in all likelihood, it was the prospect of future satisfaction that enabled me coolly and tamely to listen to his braggart language. In the heat of altercation we entered the dell, leading to the landing-place called the Glack of Craig Aral. Most of those who hear me are aware that the path then becomes extremely rugged, and that the steep-  
ness

ness of the enclosing cliffs, and their proximity to each other, render it murky and difficult of access. Divining the bitter enmity the prisoner bore me, I was unwilling to keep him company through the Glack, the obscurity of which was so favourable to any vindictive scheme his fiery brain might give birth to. I therefore wheeled about, and, without ceremony, made a retrograde movement, leaving him to be his own pilot. In about two minutes after, I heard him shouting to Lochullin, and declaring he found it impossible to proceed, unless some one better acquainted with the dell undertook to act as his guide. Repenting of my desertion, when I thus learned his perplexity, I again turned; but before I could come near enough to be of service, the party in advance had given him aid, and were once more on the move. I continued to grop my way in silence, till the extremity of the Glack, opening on the beach, became visible,

and the dim outline of those in front perceptible between me and the horizon. It was at that moment that I marked the prisoner fall behind, and elevate his hand. There followed a hollow booming sound, as though some missile sped through the air, and instantaneously Lochullin fell, shouting that he was murdered, and by Clifford."

"Recollect yourself, Glen Eynort," interrupted Craig Aral, as the other paused. "You declare that you noticed Mr. Clifford fall behind, and elevate his hand. How are we to reconcile this with your previous description of the duskiness, nay, absolute darkness, that reigned in the Glack? The outline of his figure might be visible—but how was he to be identified or distinguished from his companions?"

"Easily!" was the answer. "With the exception of the prisoner, all of us wore our own national bonnet, as is our practice when at home among our mountains.

tains. The stranger wore the Southron hat, as you yourself, laird, must remember; and, deep as was the obscurity, it enabled my eye to detect him."

"The deposition is quite consistent, in all its parts," said the laird of Ben Ard, who had been employed in taking it down in writing. "If Glen Eynort has finished, we had better proceed to examine the others having knowledge of this atrocious crime, and, if aught is adduced in corroboration, make out a committal without delay."

Hugh Catanach was accordingly called on to give in and subscribe his deposition, which went merely to corroborate the fact of Lochullin having returned, in obedience to the call of the prisoner, when in the deepest part of the Glack; the subsequent advance of the whole party, with the exception of Glen Eynort, whom he did not see; and Lochullin's fall, and questioning exclamation regarding Clifford. He also

averred, that only the latter wore a hat, and, notwithstanding the manifest pain with which he acknowledged it, confessed, that the impression made on his mind at the moment was unfavourable to the Englishman.

After Hugh, Allan Mac-an-Rhi came forward ; but the circumstance of the hat, and remembrance of hearing from a distance Lochullin's exclamation, proved the extent of his evidence. He had been so much occupied with supporting the drunken boatman as to pay little or no heed to what was going on in his rear ; and when on board the boat, attending to her course, and baling out the water she drew, prevented any conversation relative to the accident passing between him and his unfortunate friends. From a few words, however, which had dropped from Alister Chisholm, he felt inclined to exculpate Clifford ; but the purport alone of these was all with which he could charge his memory. Like  
Hugh,

Hugh, he displayed much sorrow at the Englishman's misfortune, and subjoined a hope that ultimately he would be pronounced guiltless.

"Enough," said Craig Aral, when Allan Breck had signed his deposition. "Nothing more remains for us to do but to draw up the necessary warrant, and commit the accused to the jail of ——. Yet I could have wished that, prior to his death, Lochullin had been minutely interrogated, especially as the untimely fate of Fasnacloich and Alister Chisholm creates so material a blank in the evidence."

"I was present when my grandson died," interposed sir Colin; "and though given in no judicial form, his last words were assuredly corroborative of all that has been deposed. A denunciation against his murderer lingered on his lips at the moment his soul took flight; and with that denunciation was coupled

the loathsome name of the wretch before us."

As sir Colin began to speak, Lillias, leaning on her aunt, entered the hall; and prepared as was her mind for the scene before her, she instantly comprehended the purport of the chieftain's speech. Dragging her supporter along, she advanced between the rows of obsequious dependants, who had opened a path for her approach, and, without waiting to be interrogated, exclaimed—"Not so, not so, my grandfather! Æneas never intended to criminate Mr. Clifford; but by his last words, spoken in sanity, sought to establish his innocence, and efface those suspicions a rashly-uttered question had given rise to."

"What means the frantic girl?" inquired sir Colin, as he viewed her with an aspect similar to what he might have put on, had the shade of his deceased grandson started up before him. "Sorrow

row has shaken her reason, I apprehend. Unn," and he turned to her sister, "lead Miss Macara to her room; and let care be taken, that on an occasion so momentous we are not a second time disturbed."

"Not yet—I go not yet!" cried Lillias, refusing Unn's tendered assistance. "I have much to say touching this matter; and though never permitted to speak again, must speak now."

"Speak then, in God's name!" said the chieftain. "Your brother's murderer is before you—so the moment brooks not trifling."

"He may be before me," said Lillias, glancing her eyes round the hall, till they encountered and steadily fixed on the whitened cheeks of Glen Eynort; "but if a dying man is to be believed, he whom I see a prisoner is not the man. In my hearing, and with his hand locked in that of Mr. Clifford, Lochullin made and desired me to bear witness to

this declaration. I pledged myself so to do, when he should be on his bier ; and that you, sir Colin, might give similar testimony, was I sent to require your attendance. Alas ! before you reached his apartment, my brother's reason had begun to wander ; and the incoherencies of delirium were what you misconstrued into testification against our guest."

Sir Colin was staggered for a moment, as was Craig Aral ; and the latter made haste to assert as much.—“ She is the sister of the departed,” said he, “ and, instead of having a desire to screen his murderer, must naturally incline to bring him to punishment. It really appears so improbable that the young Englishman should, without motive or provocation, wantonly take the life, or even seek to injure, one with whom he was on terms of the most friendly intimacy, that I confess myself reluctant to affix my name to an instrument branding him with infamy.”

“ The

“ The deed might be perpetrated without *malice prépense*,” observed the laird of Ben Ard; “ consequently we require to find neither motive nor provocation. I do not hesitate to express my conviction that Lochullin came accidentally by his death, or, at least, that the stone which slew him was flung without a wicked intent——”

“ That is not here to be determined,” interrupted sir Colin, gruffly. “ Homicide has been committed, and a higher tribunal must decide under what circumstances.”

“ It is serious matter,” said Craig Aral, doubtingly, “ to give a verdict which, though hereafter set aside, must have a most injurious effect on the future fortune of the young man. If cause could be shewn——”

“ Cause can be shewn,” interposed Glen Eynort, who liked not the bias the affair was taking. “ Sir Colin, it is in my power to assign a motive for the prisoner’s

soner's conduct, which will go nigh to prove that it was a premeditated act; but I hesitate to speak—a family-secret is involved.”

“ Out with it !” exclaimed sir Colin, attending to nothing but the instigations of revenge. “ At such a moment family-secrets must give way to family-duty.”

Not only the prisoner, but almost every person in the hall, started with surprise at Glen Eynort's declaration ; and there was somewhat of sternness in Craig Aral's voice, as he said—“ This is going far, sir. Keep in remembrance that the life of a fellow-creature may hereafter depend on your present adherence to truth, and that the least show of inconsistency may go far to invalidate your foregoing deposition.”

“ I shall keep your advice in view, Craig Aral,” answered Glen Eynort, proudly. “ At present I tread ground too well known to get bewildered. *Ava-*  
*rice*

*rice* was the motive that raised the hand of a false friend against my kinsman."

"Avarice!" echoed many voices at once, while a murmur of incredulity spread through the assembly.

"Yes, avarice!" returned the deponent, firmly. "I do not mean to aver that it was for the sake of what might be in his victim's pockets that the prisoner perpetrated so heinous a crime. Lillias Macara, by the death of her brother, inherits his estate, and this stranger had dared to purpose sharing it with her!"

"Monster of iniquity!" ejaculated sir Colin, turning furiously on the prisoner, while all stood aghast, "can it really be so? To the proof, Ninian—to the proof! we have dallied long enough."

"The proof is this," resumed Glen Eynort. "Two days preceding that on which we visited Craig Aral, I returned to Glen Rimmon, after a short absence. The interest I take in the affliction of  
Riach

Riach MacRyri, my unhappy foster-father, is generally known; I therefore, before announcing my arrival at the castle, first visited the Fall of Smoke, in the caverns of which he is frequently to be found. While in his miserable abode, the sound of voices from above attracted my attention, and, anxious to know from whence the shouts proceeded, I sallied forth. On the projection overhanging the mouth of the cave, I found two of the intruders seated, and in earnest converse: those two persons were Miss Macara and the prisoner; and as their *tête-à-tête* seemed interesting, I was too gallant to break in upon it, yet, with shame, confess I could not resist the temptation of learning its import. How I blush to declare, that I heard a tale of love poured by such a man into the ears of a daughter of Macrimmon! Yet so it was; and let him who can confute it."

"Are ye both dumb?" exclaimed sir Colin, wrathfully rolling his glance on  
Clifford

Clifford and his granddaughter. "Trembling girl! have you not one drop of Macrimmon's blood, that you stand tamely by, and hear an honourable name thus degraded?"

"It is not Miss Macara that ought to speak," said Clifford, desperately. "If I did for a moment lose self-command, and avow how much I admired her, her situation was such as to leave her no alternative but to listen. Aware that false witness bears strongly against me, I will here enter into no personal defence; but whatever death I die, the recollection of this hour shall sweeten it. With such an advocate—a defender, I submit that for the present all the world believe me guilty."

"Take the presumptuous caitiff from my sight!" exclaimed sir Colin, foaming with rage. "He shall die, though Macrimmon's own hand should shed his blood; and that mean-spirited girl  
too

too—why is she left here to dishonour me?”

The last remains of that firmness and resolution, which only such an event could have called forth from the mild and timid Lillias, had not yet totally evaporated. As she saw the attendants about to lead Clifford away, she once more spoke in his behalf.—“ ‘Then falsehood triumphs,’ were her words, “and the innocent must submit. But one struggle more shall be made, if I have life granted to make it. Hear me, Mr. Clifford, before you go to your lonely cell, and take comfort from my promise, if comfort yet can reach your heart. At the bar of that tribunal, whose prerogative it is to award punishment or acquittal, I will appear, and repeat the last words of our sainted Lochullin! If I save your life, I shall accomplish more good than I ever hoped to perform during my sojourn on earth—if I fail,  
then

then let the name of Macrimmon bear the credit of the deed!"

Clifford heard not the conclusion of this address, but he heard sufficient to yield consolation, terrible as was the moment.

Lillias was conducted to her apartment, in a state of agony that seemed to threaten her intellect, to the partial derangement of which sir Colin attributed her behaviour.

END OF VOL. I.

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